DANIEL WARREN JOHNSON JORGE CORONA SARAH STERN

TRANSFORMERS

image

#15

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE FIFTEEN

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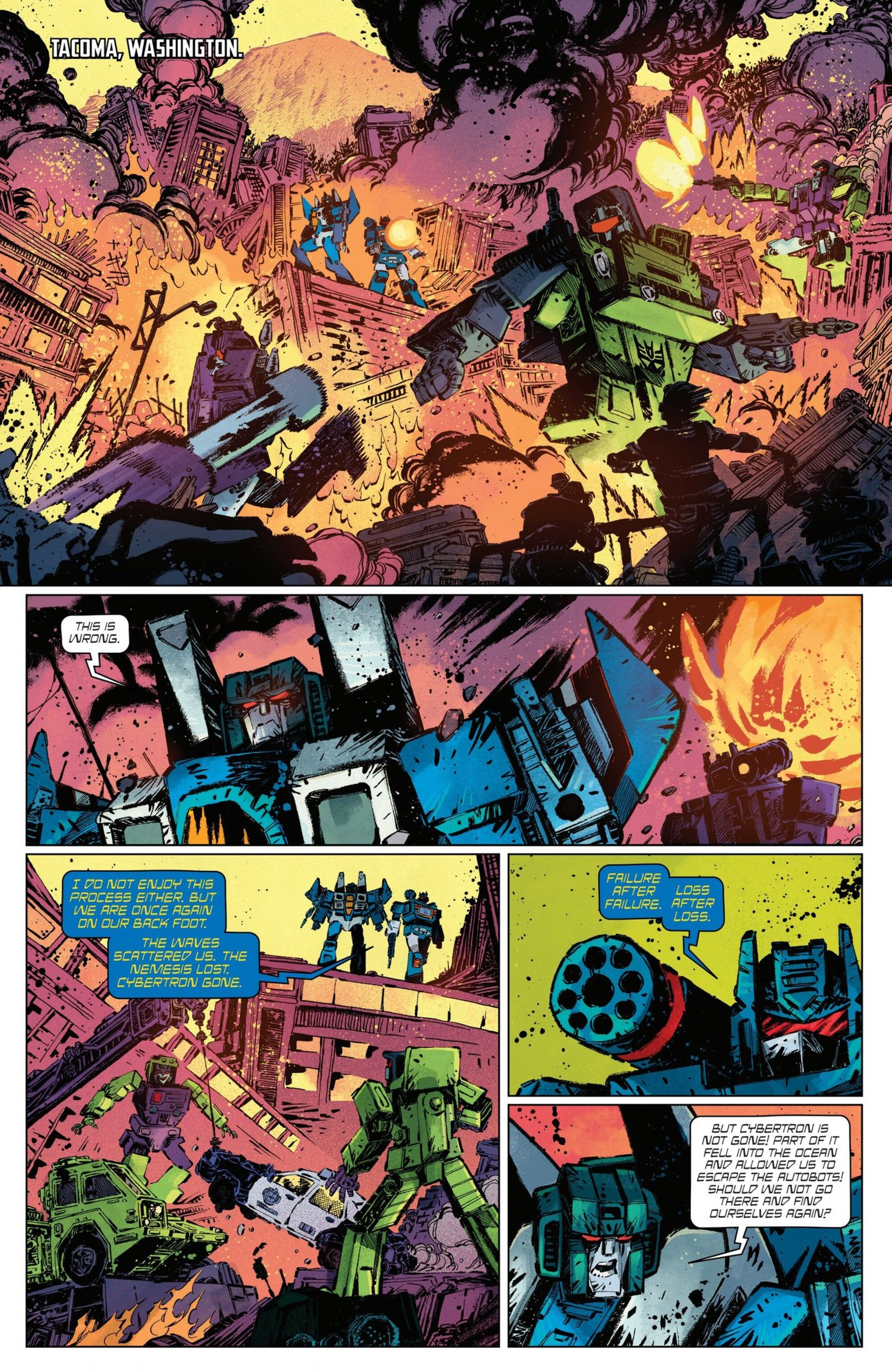
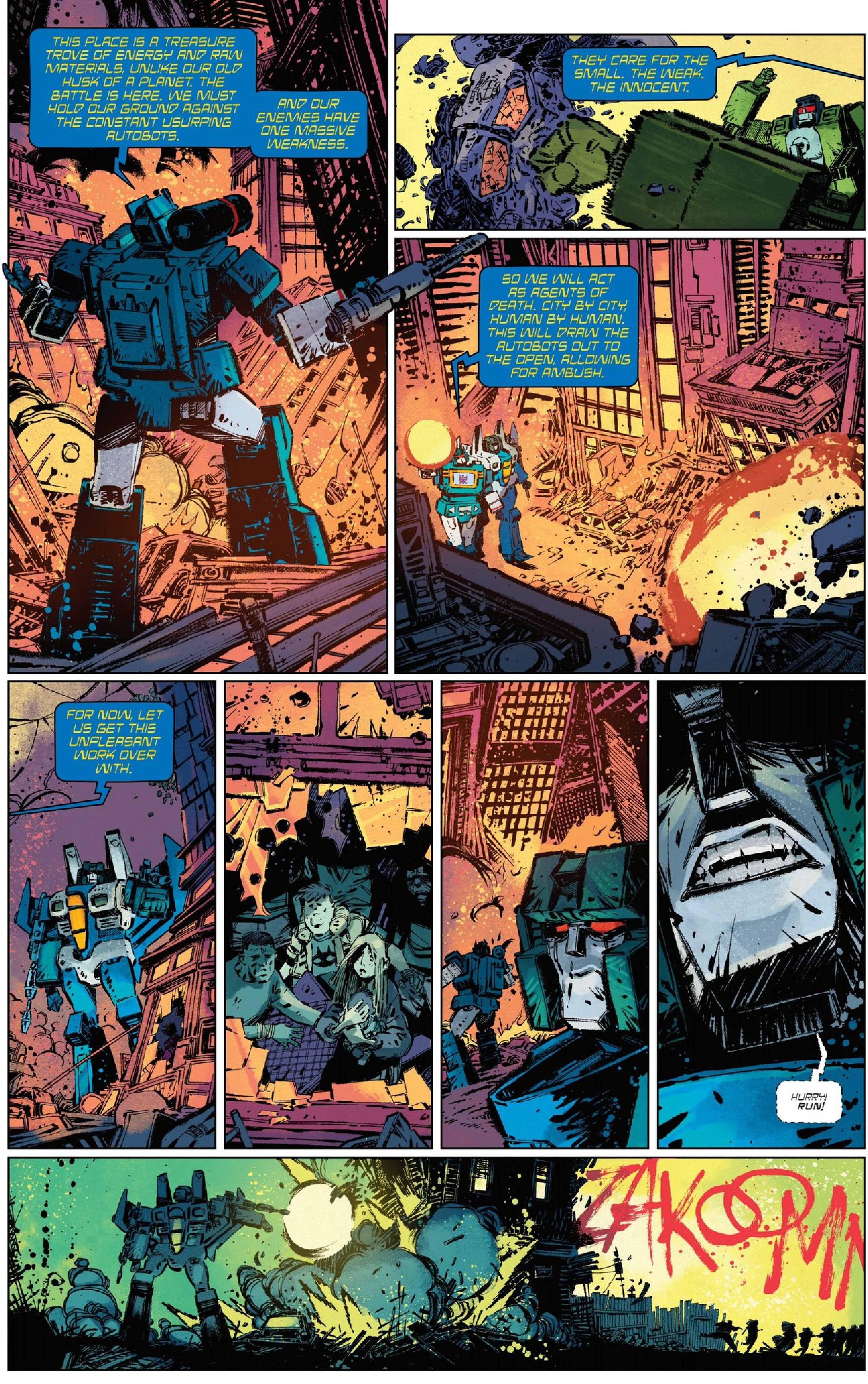
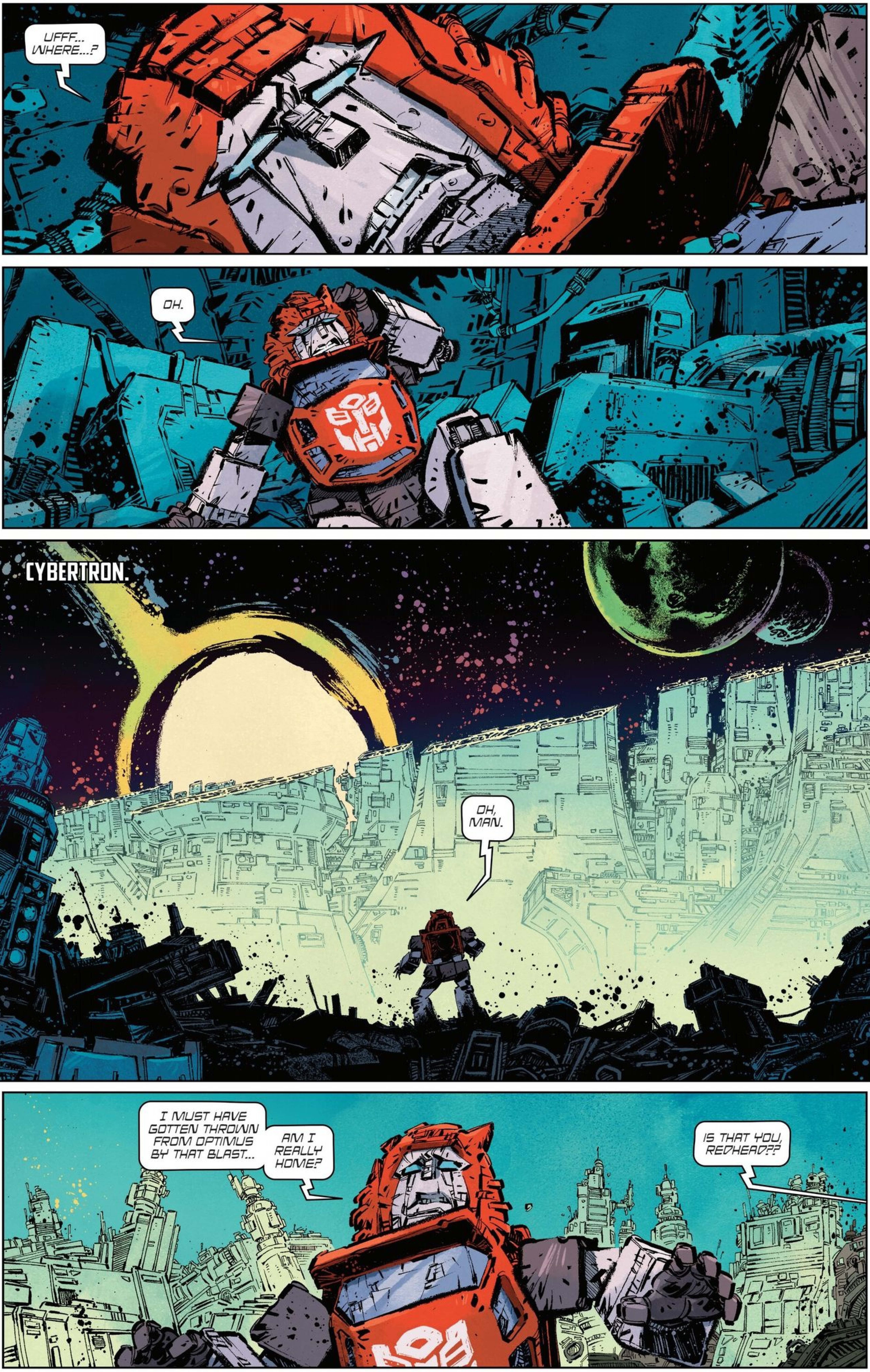
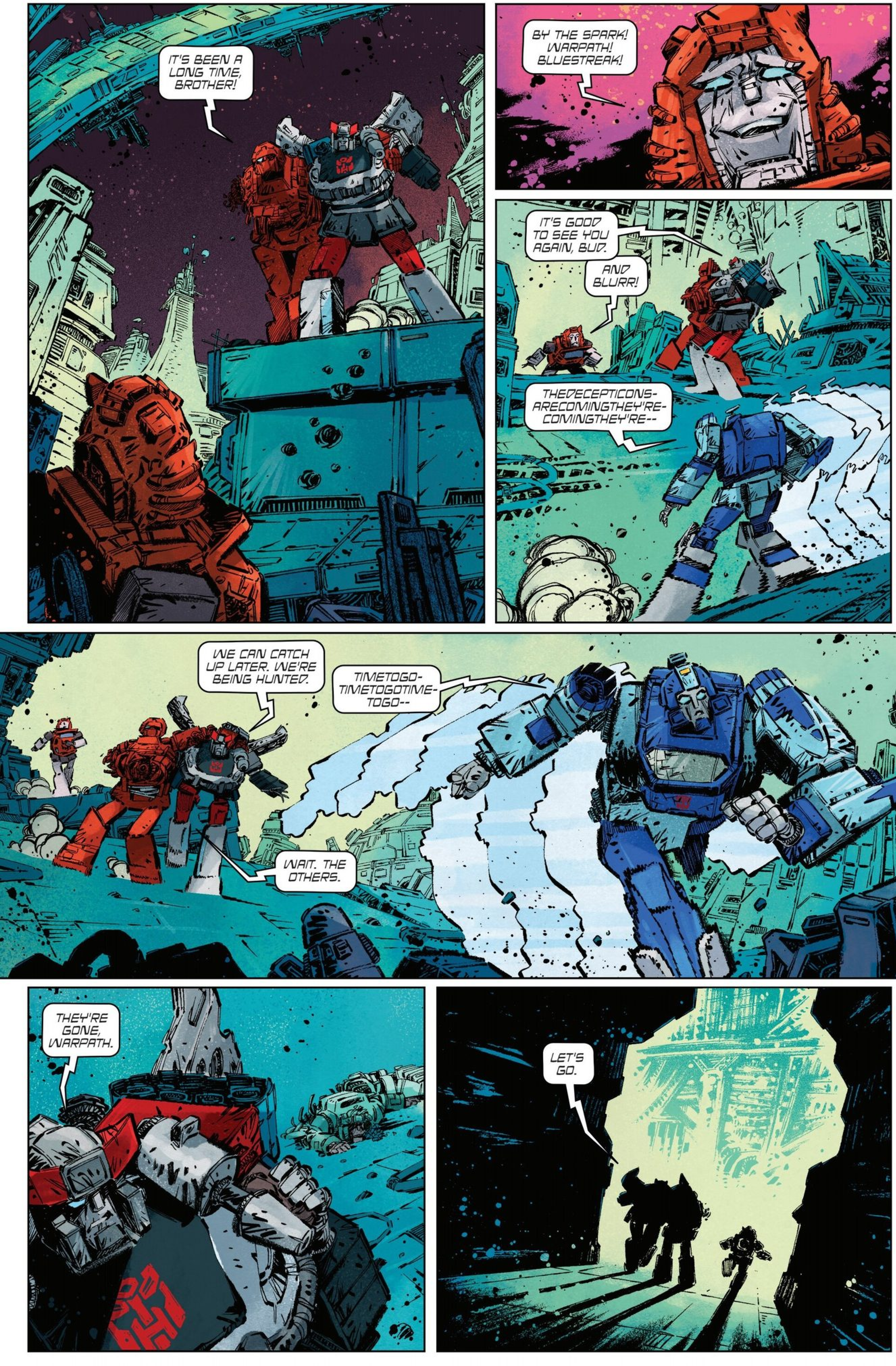
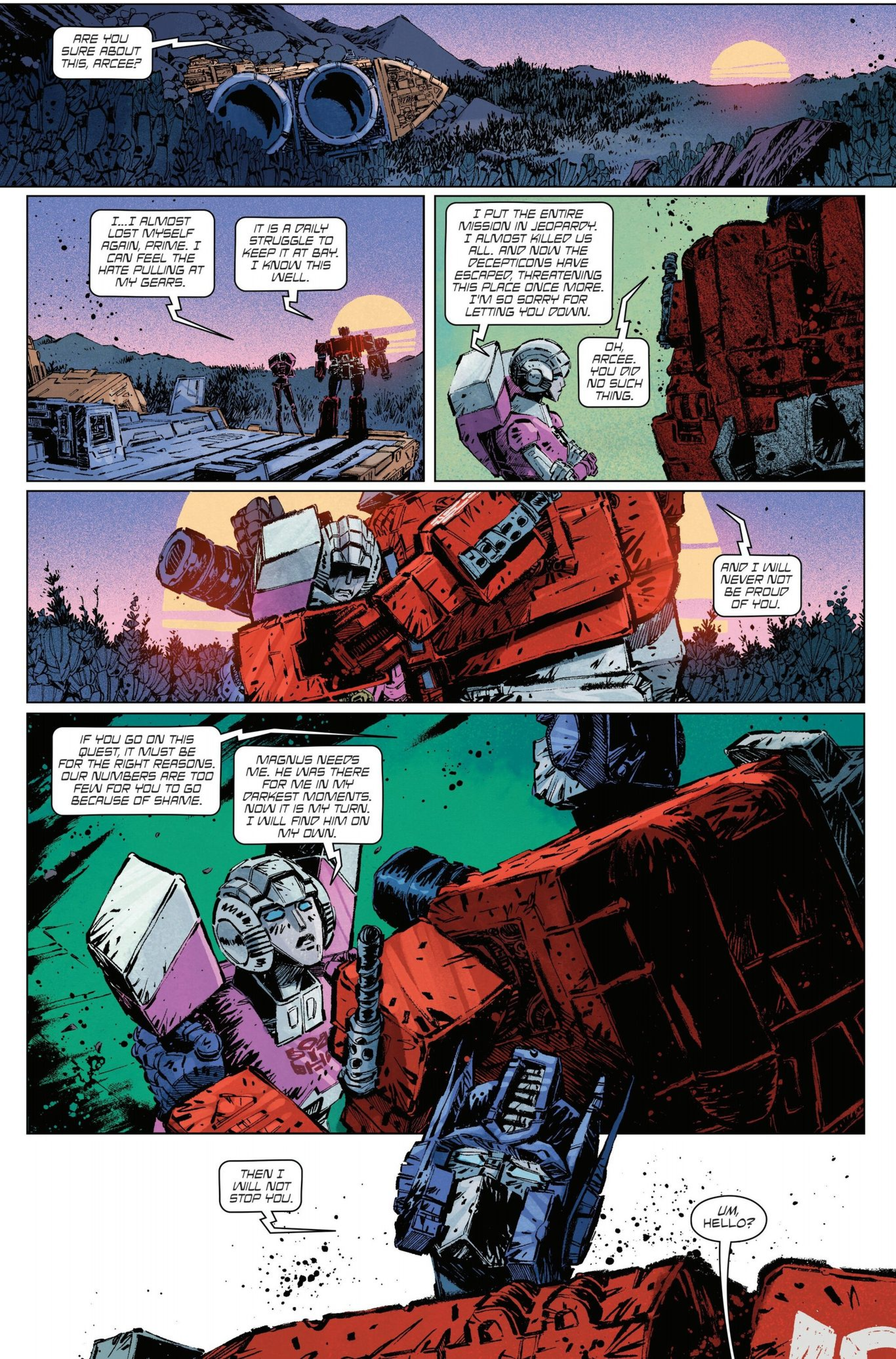
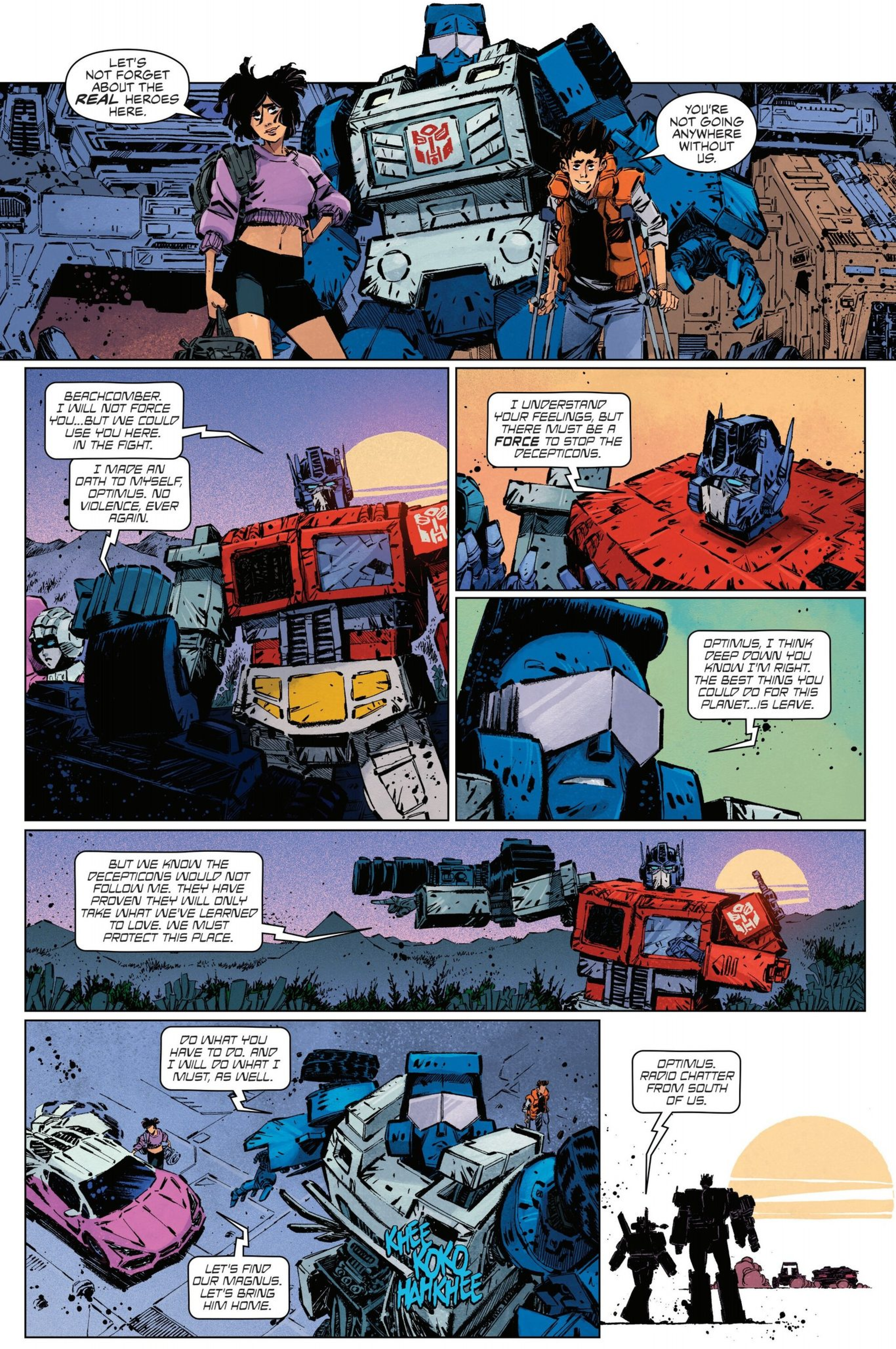

TACOMA, WASHINGTON.
THIS IS WRONG.
I DO NOT ENJOY THIS PROCESS EITHER. BUT WE ARE ONCE AGAIN ON OUR BACK FOOT.
THE WAVES SCATTERED US. THE NEMESIS LOST. CYBERTRON GONE.
FAILURE AFTER FAILURE.
LOSS AFTER LOSS.
BUT CYBERTRON IS NOT GONE! PART OF IT FELL INTO THE OCEAN AND ALLOWED US TO ESCAPE THE AUTOBOTS! SHOULD WE NOT GO THERE AND FIND OURSELVES AGAIN?

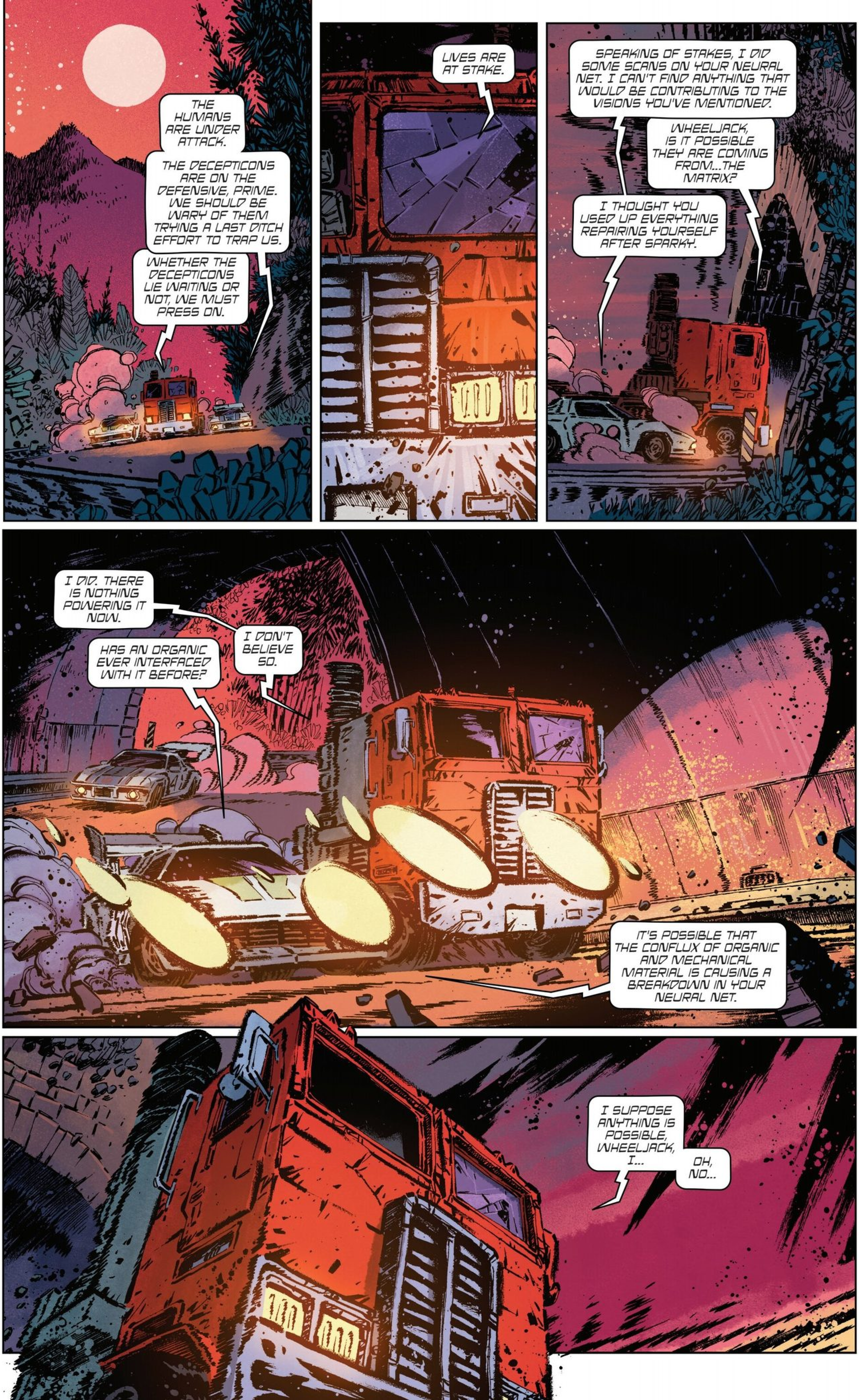

THIS PLACE IS A TREASURE TROVE OF ENERGY AND RAW MATERIALS, UNLIKE OUR OLD HUSK OF A PLANET. THE BATTLE IS HERE. WE MUST HOLD OUR GROUND AGAINST THE CONSTANT USURPING AUTOBOTS.
AND OUR ENEMIES HAVE ONE MASSIVE WEAKNESS.
THEY CARE FOR THE SMALL. THE WEAK. THE INNOCENT.
SO WE WILL ACT AS AGENTS OF DEATH. CITY BY CITY, HUMAN BY HUMAN. THIS WILL DRAW THE AUTOBOTS OUT TO THE OPEN, ALLOWING FOR AMBUSH.
FOR NOW, LET US GET THIS UNPLEASANT WORK OVER WITH.
HURRY! RUN!
ZAKOOM

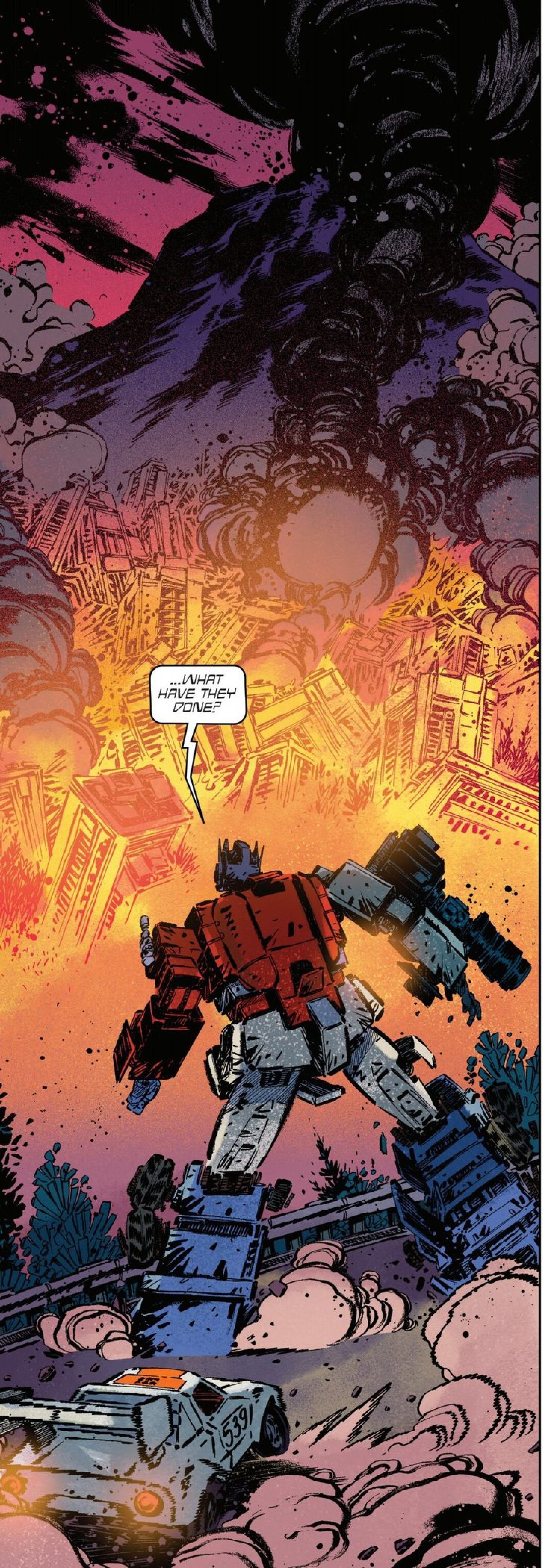

UFFF... WHERE...?
OH.
CYBERTRON.
OH, MAN.
I MUST HAVE GOTTEN THROWN FROM OPTIMUS BY THAT BLAST...
AM I REALLY HOME?
IS THAT YOU, REDHEAD??

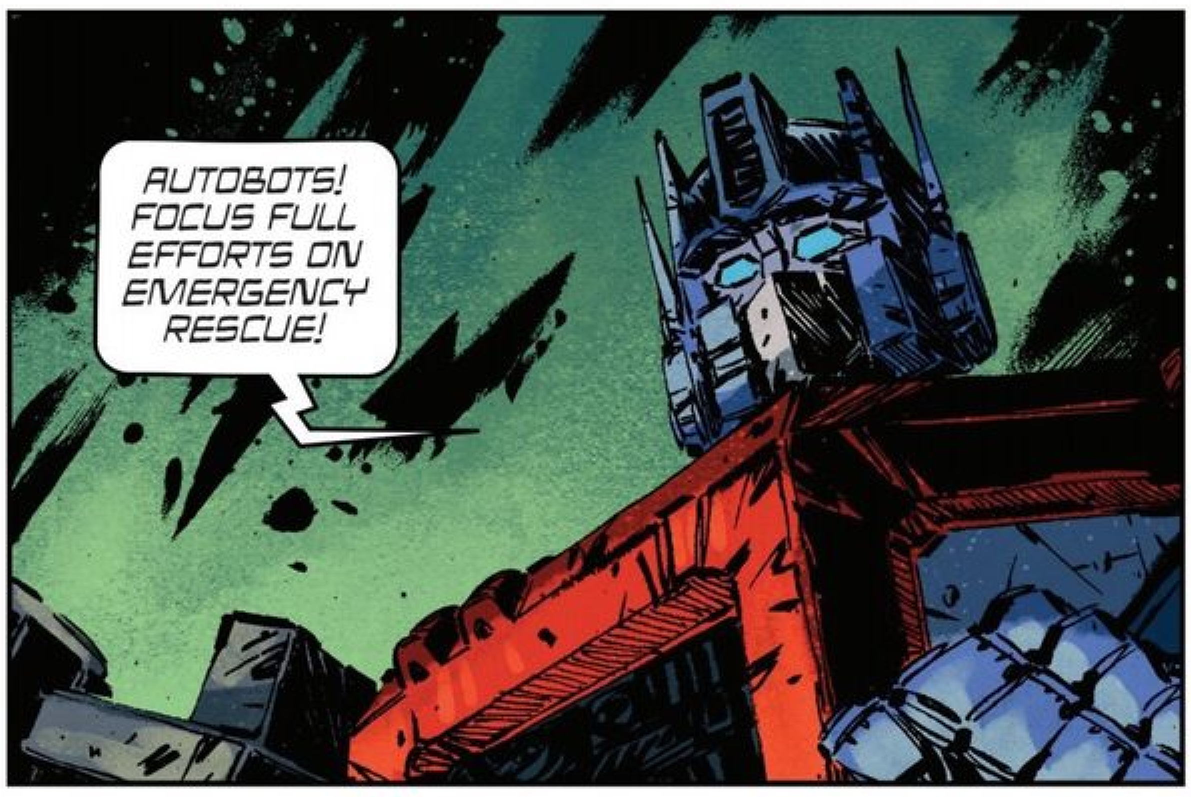

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME, BROTHER!
BY THE SPARK! WARPATH! BLUESTREAK!
IT'S GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN, BUD.
AND BLURR!
THEDECEPTICONS-ARECOMINGTHEY'RE-COMINGTHEY'RE--
WE CAN CATCH UP LATER. WE'RE BEING HUNTED.
TIMETOGO-TIMETOGOTIME-TOGO--
WAIT. THE OTHERS.
THEY'RE GONE, WARPATH.
LET'S GO.

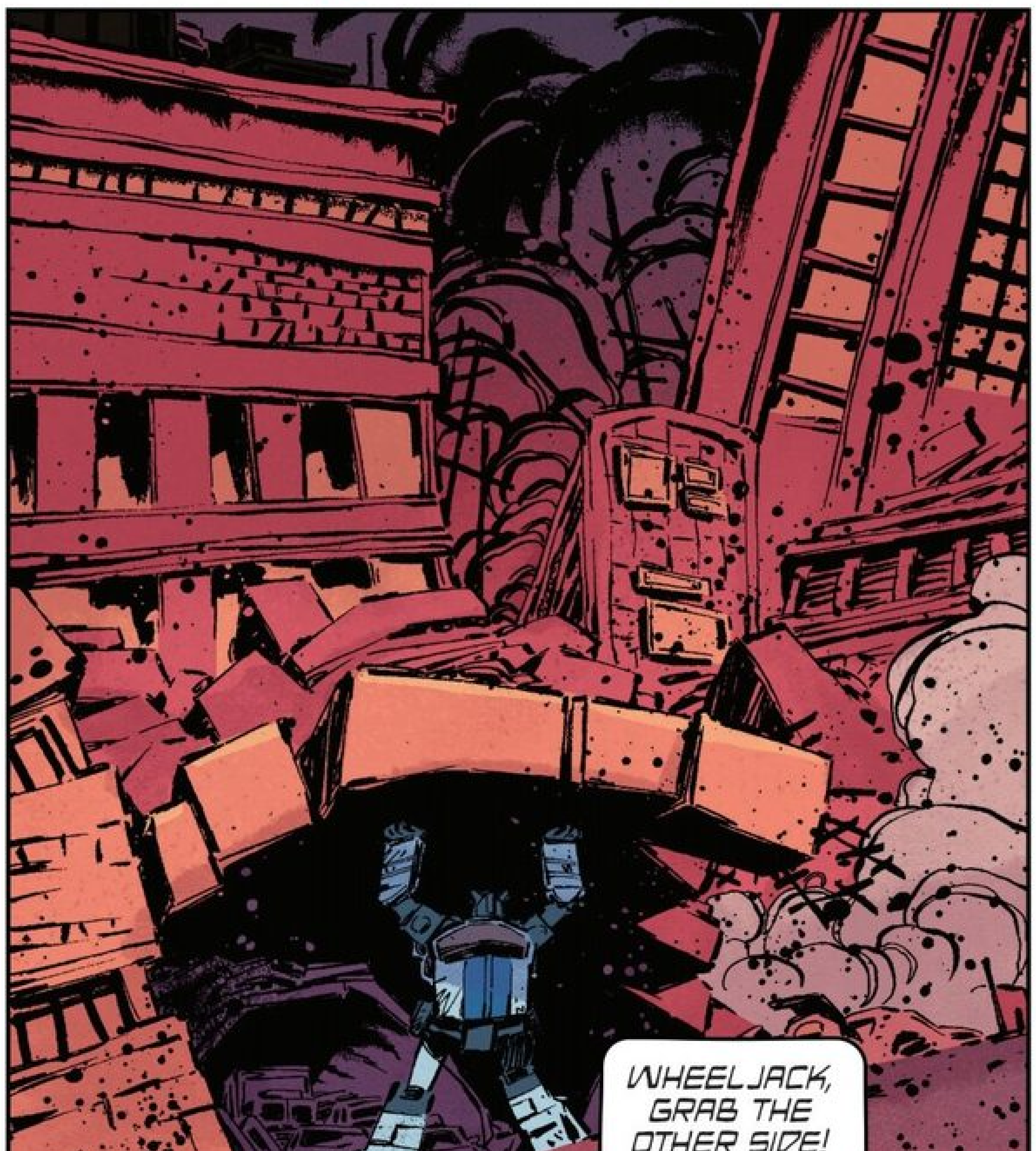

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, ARCEE?
I...I ALMOST LOST MYSELF AGAIN, PRIME. I CAN FEEL THE HATE PULLING AT MY GEARS.
IT IS A DAILY STRUGGLE TO KEEP IT AT BAY. I KNOW THIS WELL.
I PUT THE ENTIRE MISSION IN JEOPARDY. I ALMOST KILLED US ALL. AND NOW THE DECEPTICONS HAVE ESCAPED, THREATENING THIS PLACE ONCE MORE. I'M SO SORRY FOR LETTING YOU DOWN.
OH, ARCEE. YOU DID NO SUCH THING.
AND I WILL NEVER NOT BE PROUD OF YOU.
IF YOU GO ON THIS QUEST, IT MUST BE FOR THE RIGHT REASONS. OUR NUMBERS ARE TOO FEW FOR YOU TO GO BECAUSE OF SHAME.
MAGNUS NEEDS ME. HE WAS THERE FOR ME IN MY DARKEST MOMENTS. NOW IT IS MY TURN. I WILL FIND HIM ON MY OWN.
THEN I WILL NOT STOP YOU.
UM, HELLO?

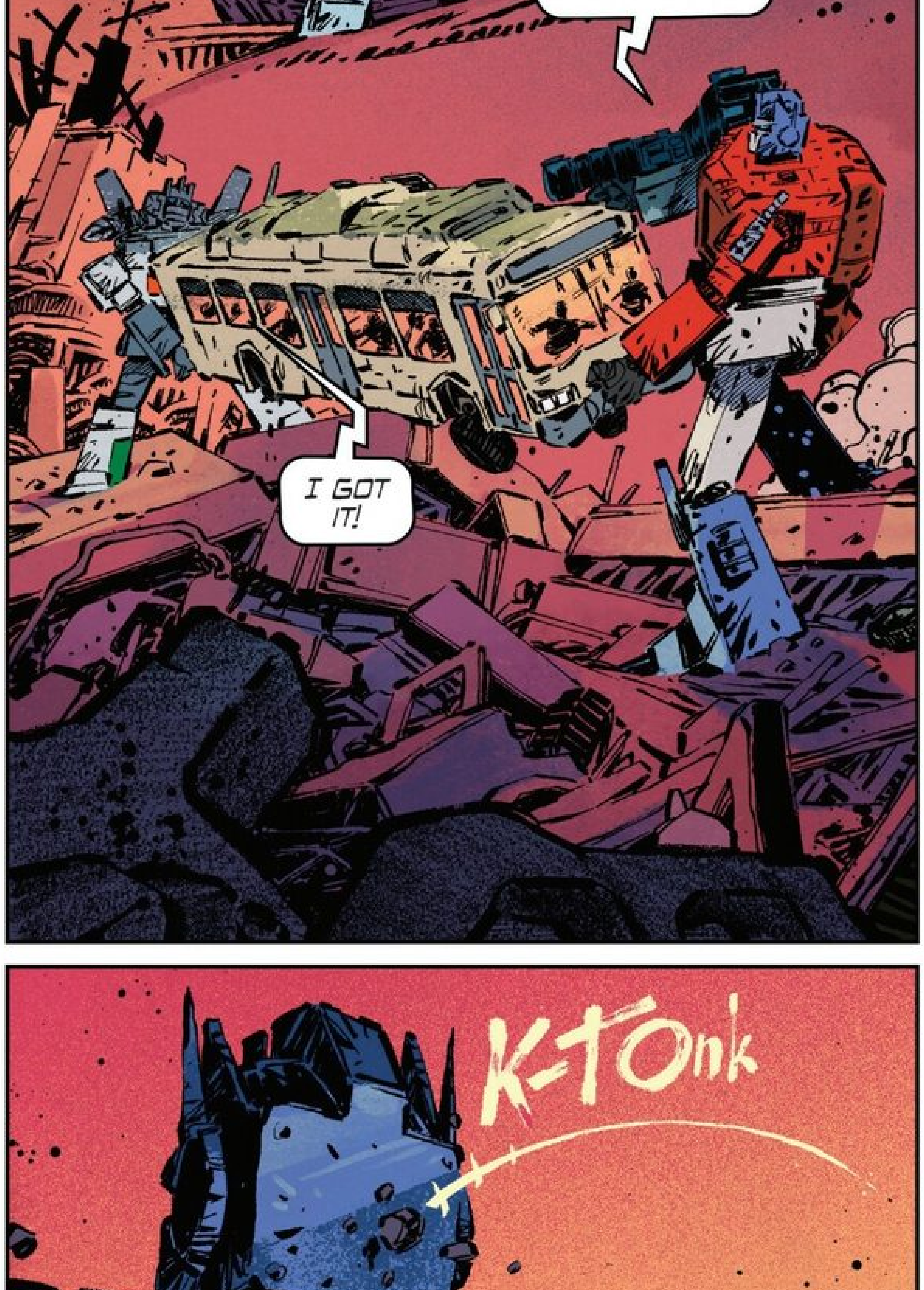

LET'S NOT FORGET ABOUT THE REAL HEROES HERE.
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE WITHOUT US.
BEACHCOMBER. I WILL NOT FORCE YOU...BUT WE COULD USE YOU HERE. IN THE FIGHT.
I MADE AN OATH TO MYSELF, OPTIMUS. NO VIOLENCE, EVER AGAIN.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR FEELINGS, BUT THERE MUST BE A FORCE TO STOP THE DECEPTICONS.
OPTIMUS, I THINK DEEP DOWN YOU KNOW I'M RIGHT. THE BEST THING YOU COULD DO FOR THIS PLANET...IS LEAVE.
BUT WE KNOW THE DECEPTICONS WOULD NOT FOLLOW ME. THEY HAVE PROVEN THEY WILL ONLY TAKE WHAT WE'VE LEARNED TO LOVE. WE MUST PROTECT THIS PLACE.
DO WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO. AND I WILL DO WHAT I MUST, AS WELL.
KHEE KOKO HAHKHEE
LET'S FIND OUR MAGNUS. LET'S BRING HIM HOME.
OPTIMUS. RADIO CHATTER FROM SOUTH OF US.

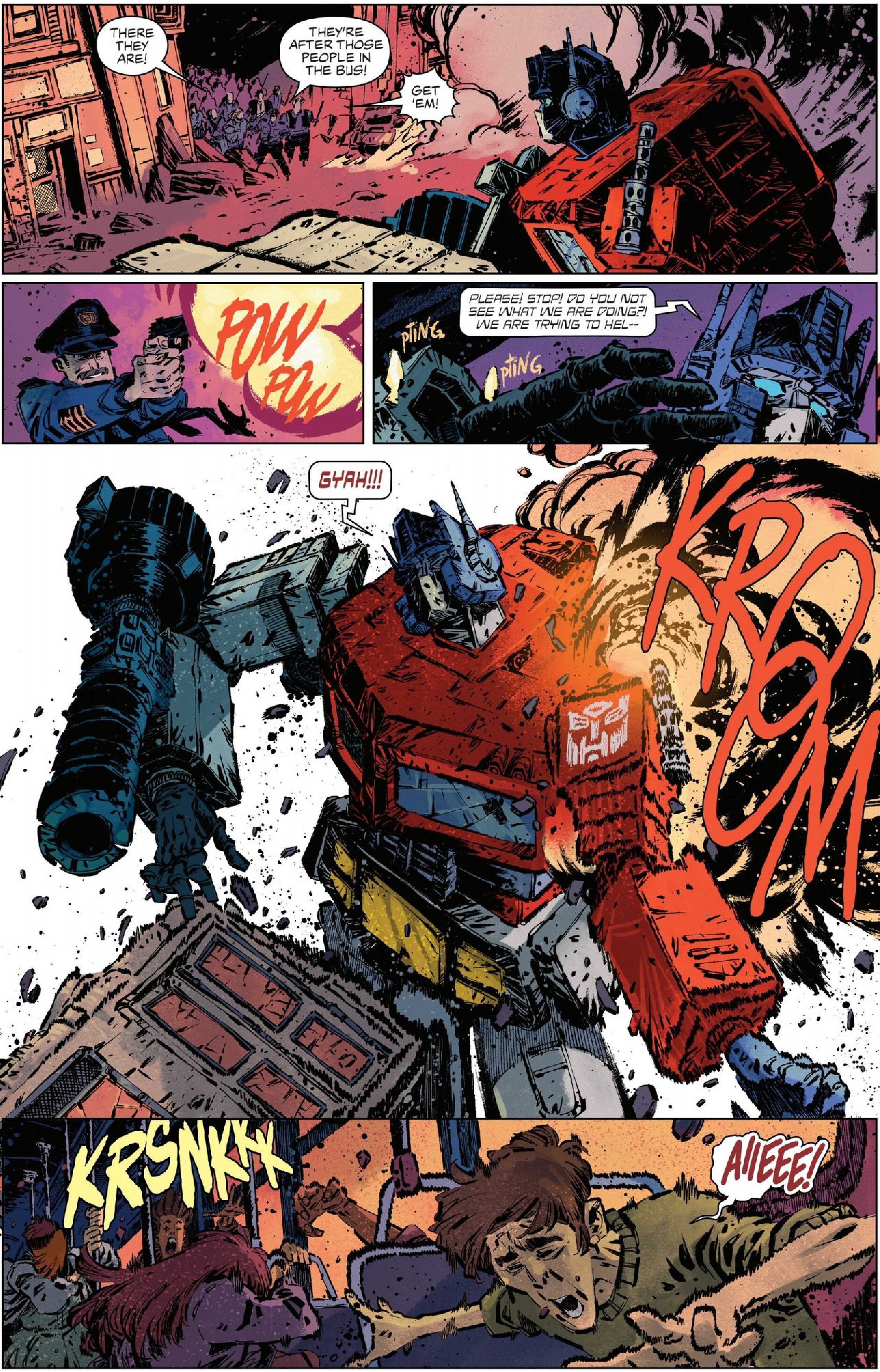

THE HUMANS ARE UNDER ATTACK.
THE DECEPTICONS ARE ON THE DEFENSIVE, PRIME. WE SHOULD BE WARY OF THEM TRYING A LAST DITCH EFFORT TO TRAP US.
WHETHER THE DECEPTICONS LIE WAITING OR NOT, WE MUST PRESS ON.
LIVES ARE AT STAKE.
SPEAKING OF STAKES, I DID SOME SCANS ON YOUR NEURAL NET. I CAN'T FIND ANYTHING THAT WOULD BE CONTRIBUTING TO THE VISIONS YOU'VE MENTIONED.
WHEELJACK, IS IT POSSIBLE THEY ARE COMING FROM...THE MATRIX?
I THOUGHT YOU USED UP EVERYTHING REPAIRING YOURSELF AFTER SPARKY.
I DID. THERE IS NOTHING POWERING IT NOW.
I DON'T BELIEVE SO.
HAS AN ORGANIC EVER INTERFACED WITH IT BEFORE?
IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE CONFLUX OF ORGANIC AND MECHANICAL MATERIAL IS CAUSING A BREAKDOWN IN YOUR NEURAL NET.
I SUPPOSE ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE, WHEELJACK, I...
OH, NO...

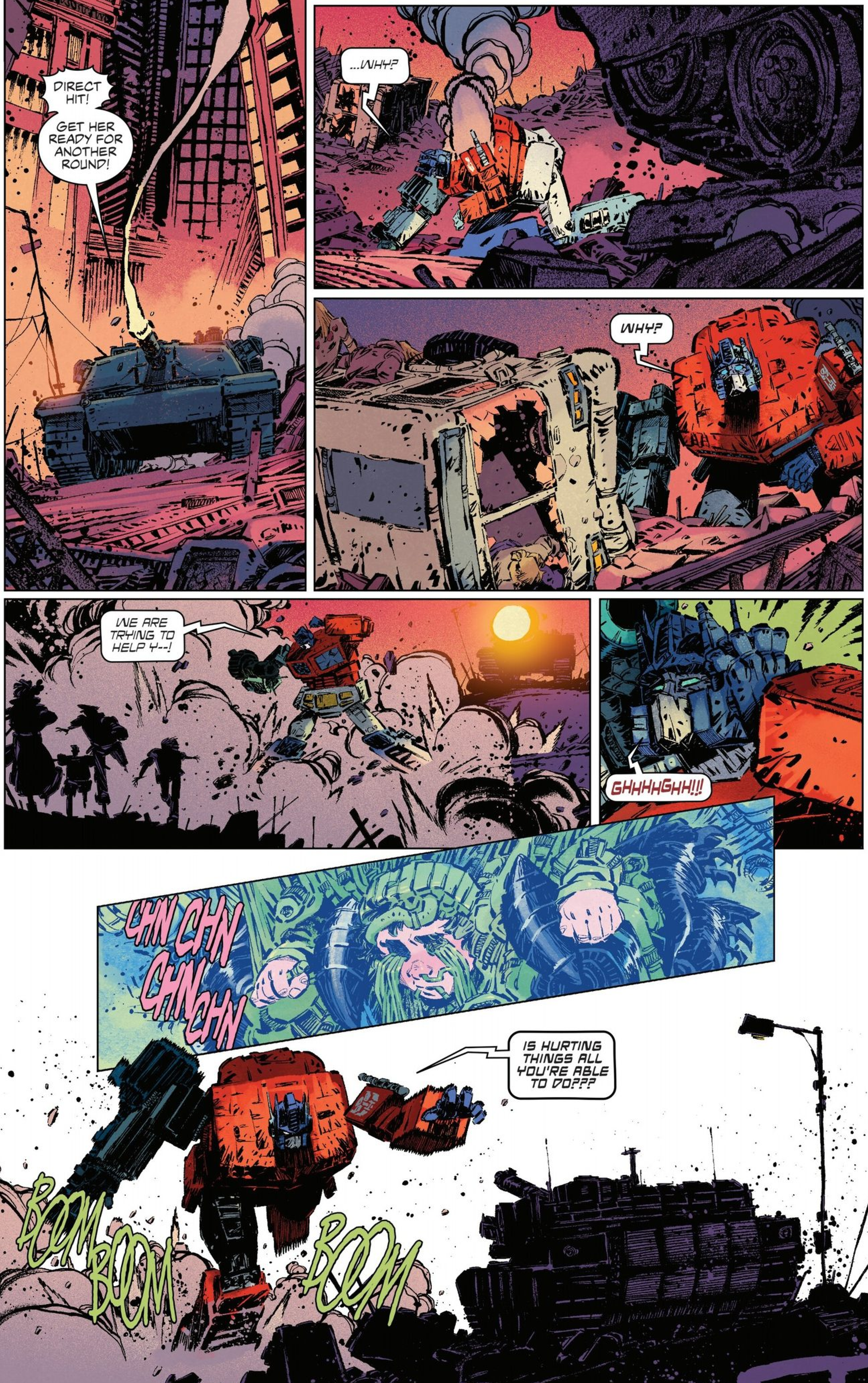

...WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?
539

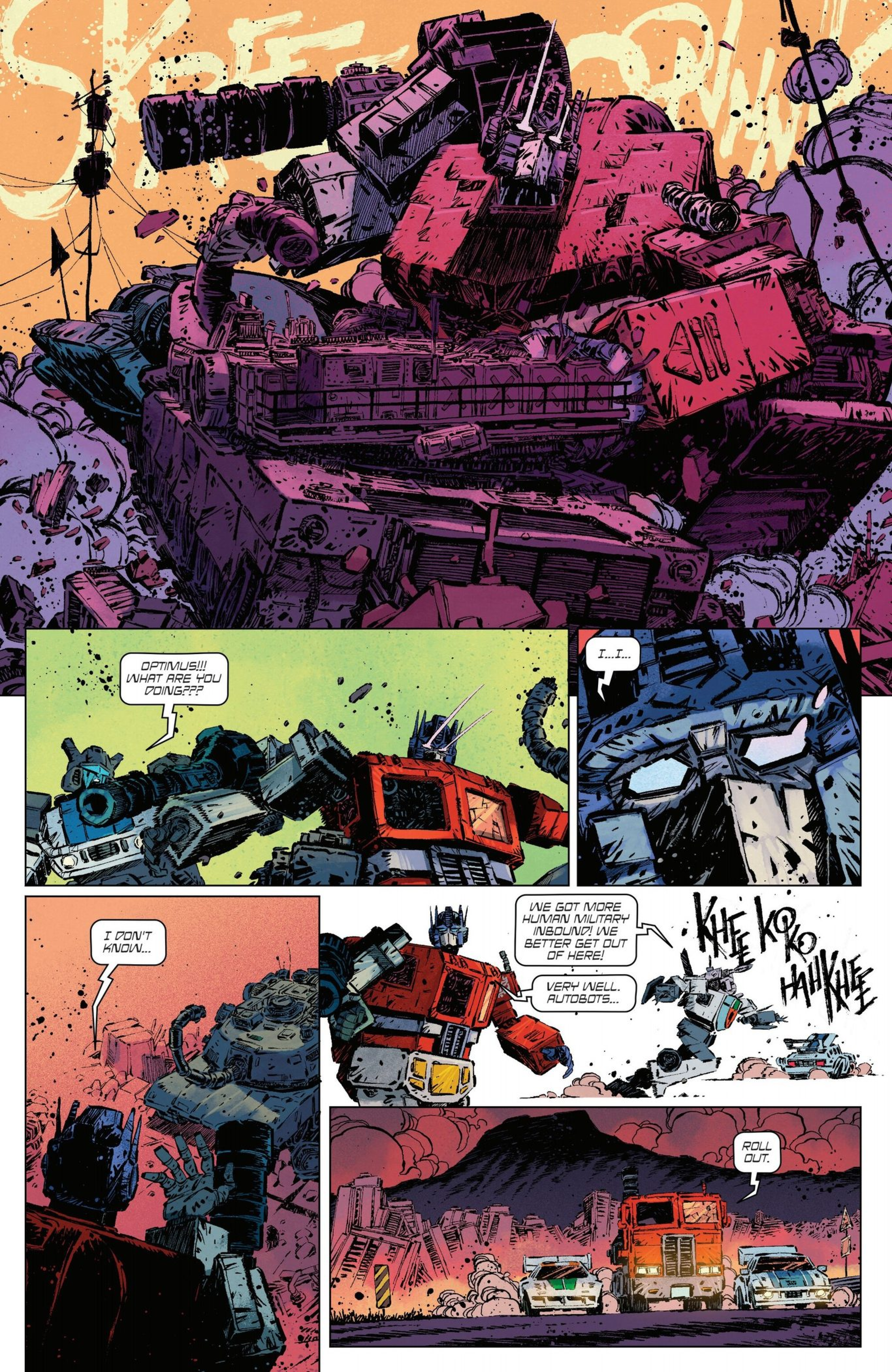

AUTOBOTS! FOCUS FULL EFFORTS ON EMERGENCY RESCUE!

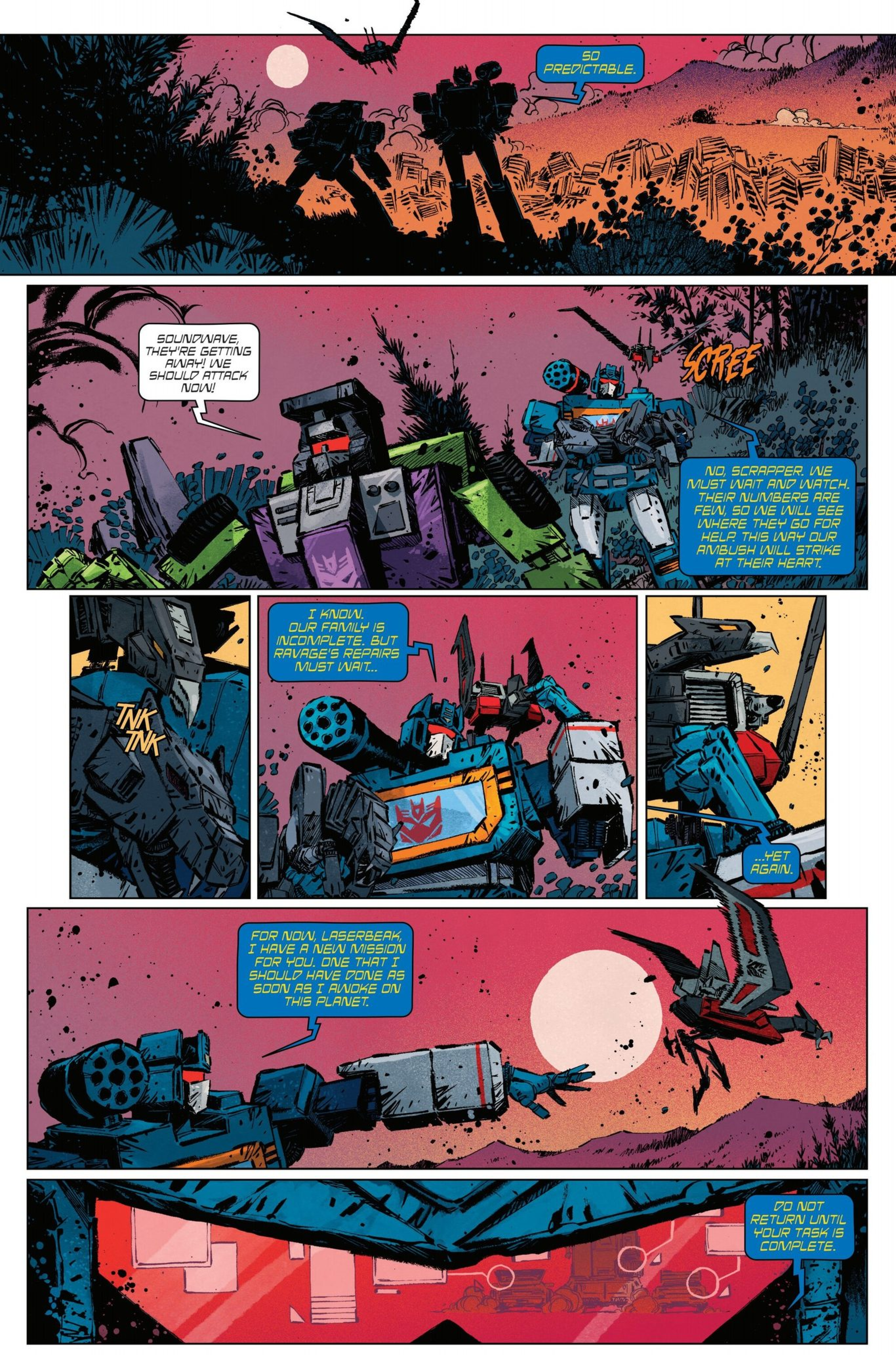

WHEELJACK, GRAB THE OTHER SIDE!
I GOT IT!

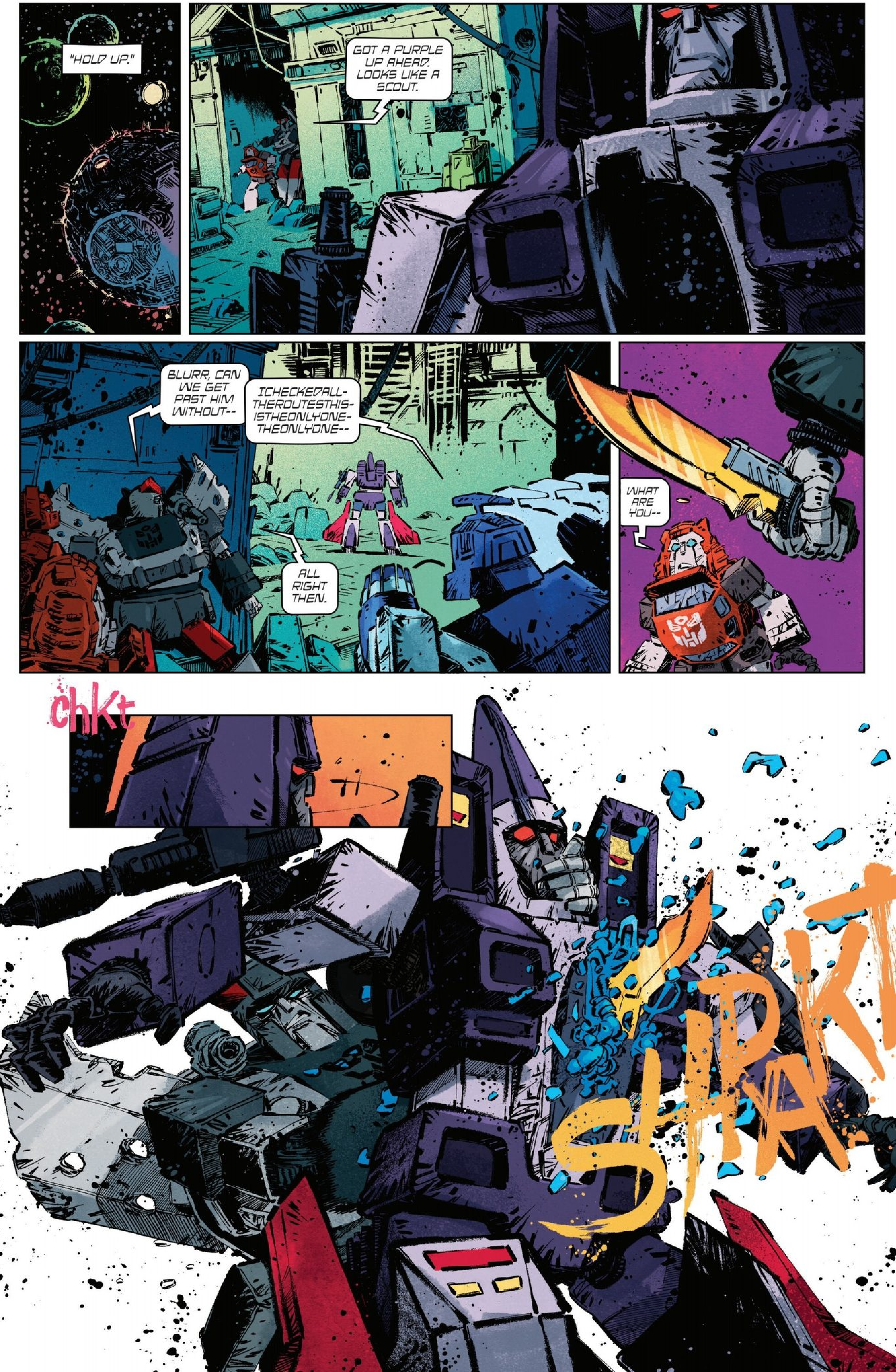

K-TOnk

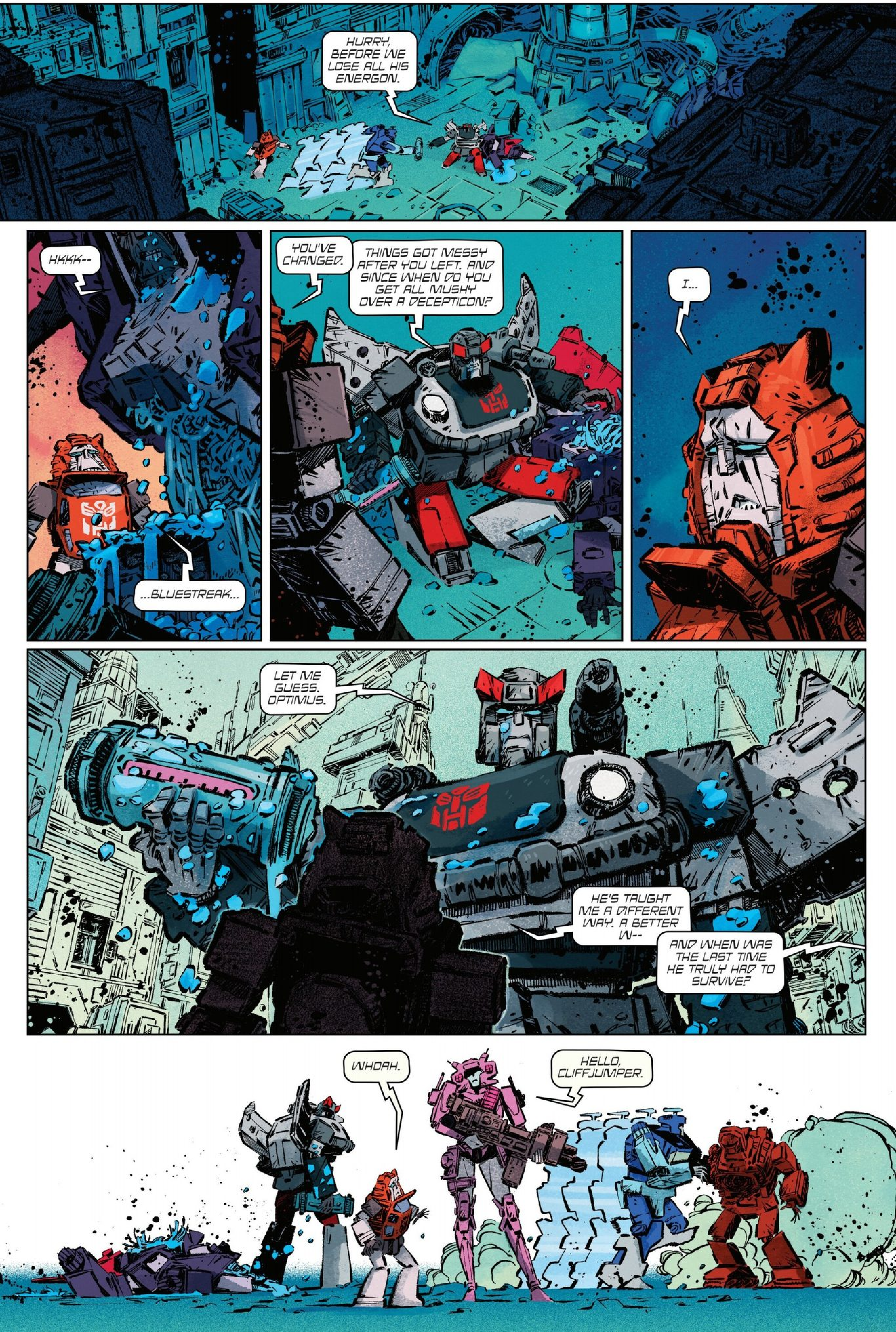

THERE THEY ARE!
THEY'RE AFTER THOSE PEOPLE IN THE BUS!
GET 'EM!
POW POW
PTING
PLEASE! STOP! DO YOU NOT SEE WHAT WE ARE DOING?! WE ARE TRYING TO HEL--
PTING
GYAH!!!
KROOM
KRSNKKK
AIIEEE!

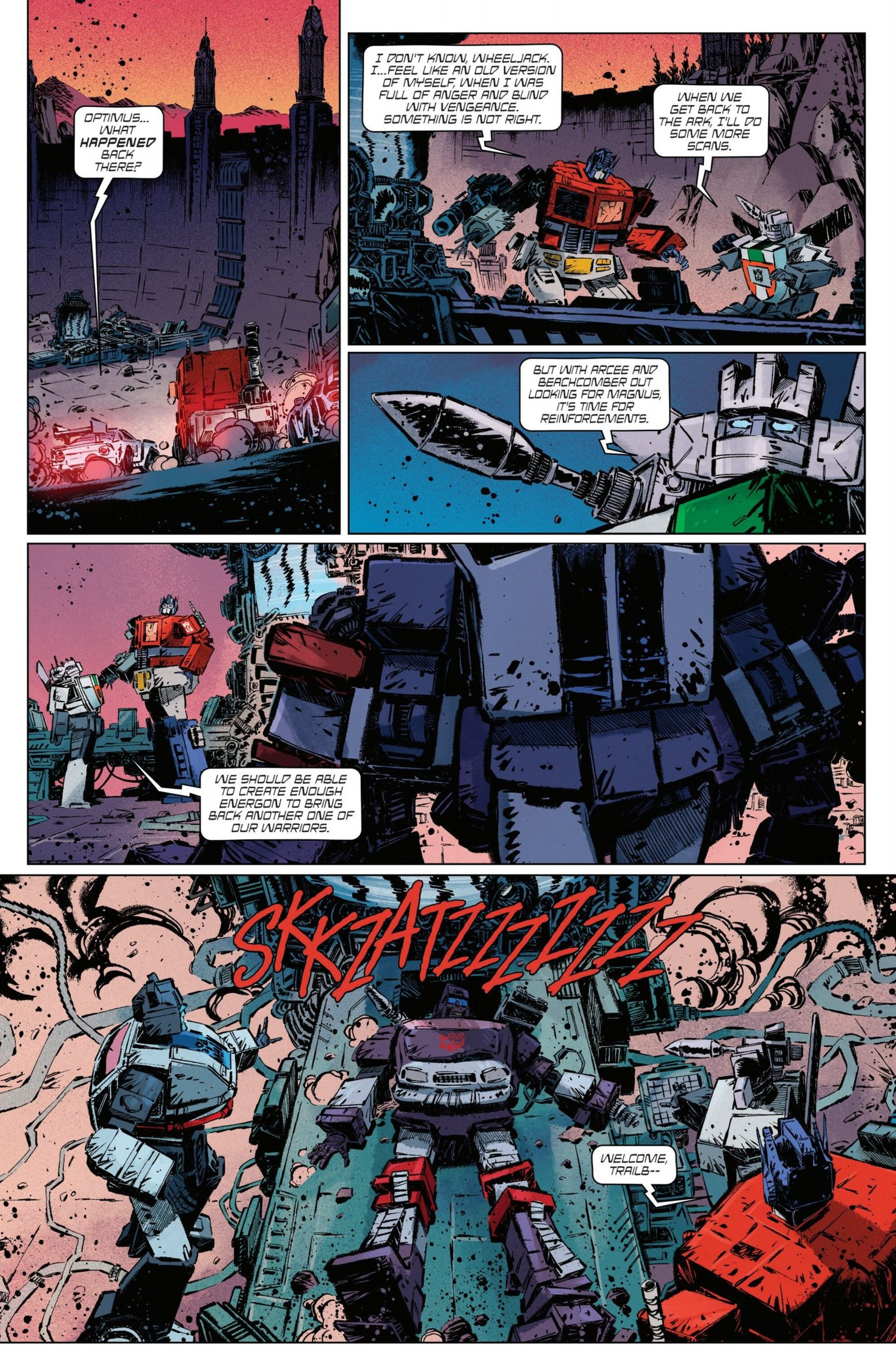

DIRECT HIT!
GET HER READY FOR ANOTHER ROUND!
...WHY?
WHY?
WE ARE TRYING TO HELP Y--!
GHHHHGHH!!!
CHN CHN CHN CHN
IS HURTING THINGS ALL YOU'RE ABLE TO DO???
BOOM BOOM BOOM

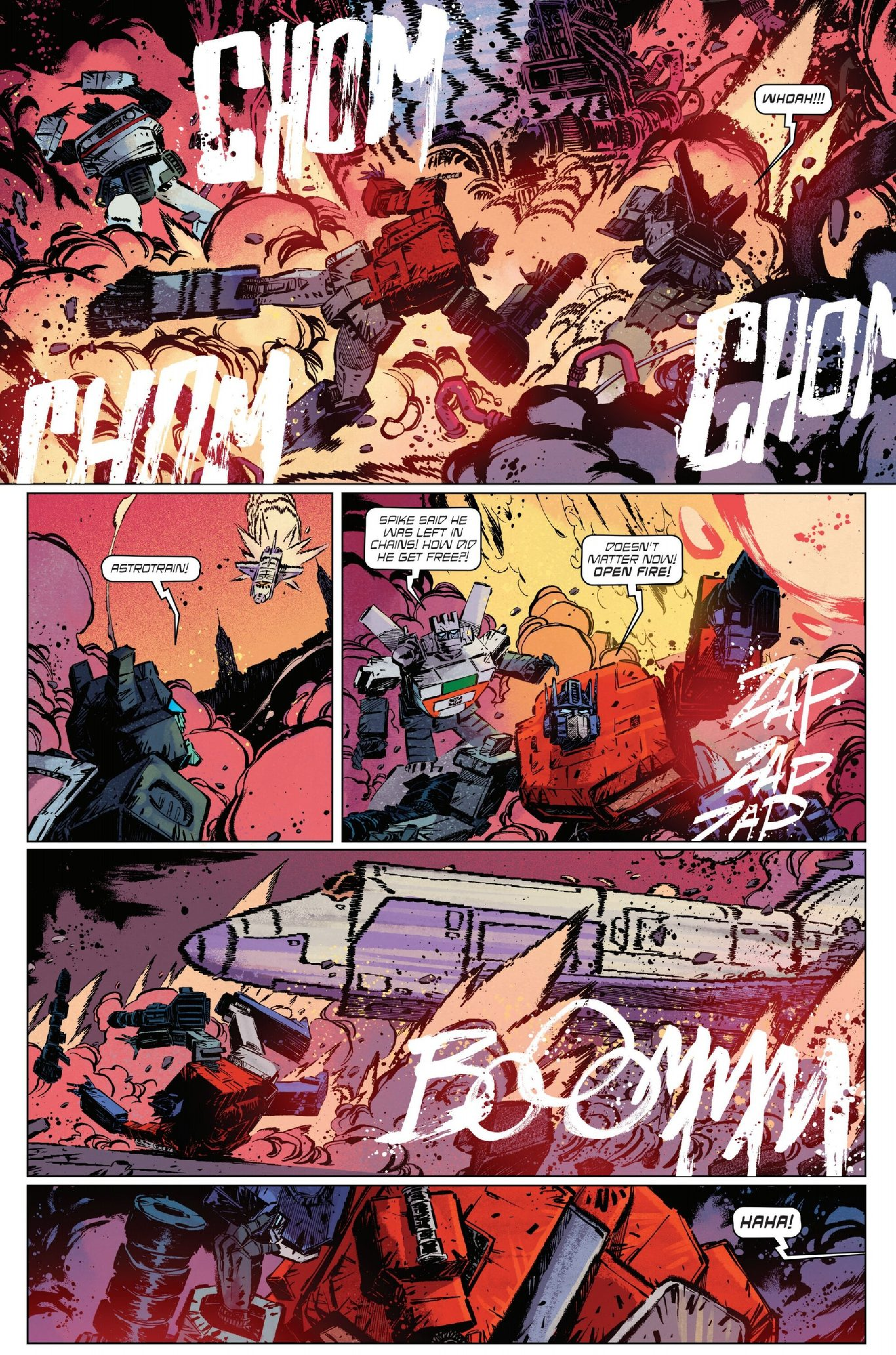

SKREEEOONNK
OPTIMUS!!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING???
I...I...
I DON'T KNOW...
WE GOT MORE HUMAN MILITARY INBOUND! WE BETTER GET OUT OF HERE!
VERY WELL. AUTOBOTS...
KHEE KOKO HAHKHEE
ROLL OUT.

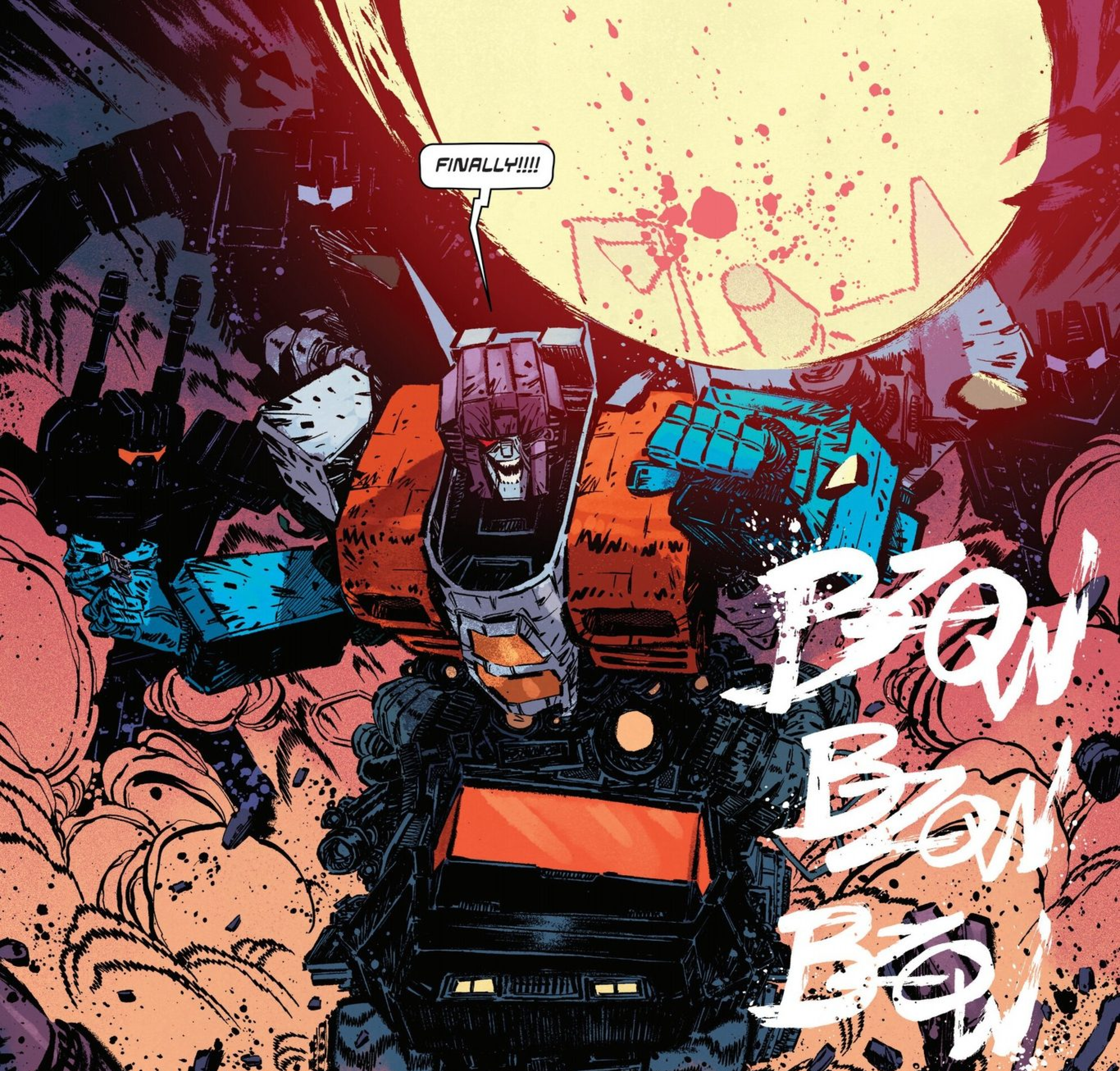

SO PREDICTABLE.
SOUNDWAVE, THEY'RE GETTING AWAY! WE SHOULD ATTACK NOW!
SCREE
NO, SCRAPPER. WE MUST WAIT AND WATCH. THEIR NUMBERS ARE FEW, SO WE WILL SEE WHERE THEY GO FOR HELP. THIS WAY OUR AMBUSH WILL STRIKE AT THEIR HEART.
TNK TNK
I KNOW. OUR FAMILY IS INCOMPLETE. BUT RAVAGE'S REPAIRS MUST WAIT...
...YET AGAIN.
FOR NOW, LASERBEAK, I HAVE A NEW MISSION FOR YOU. ONE THAT I SHOULD HAVE DONE AS SOON AS I AWOKE ON THIS PLANET.
DO NOT RETURN UNTIL YOUR TASK IS COMPLETE.

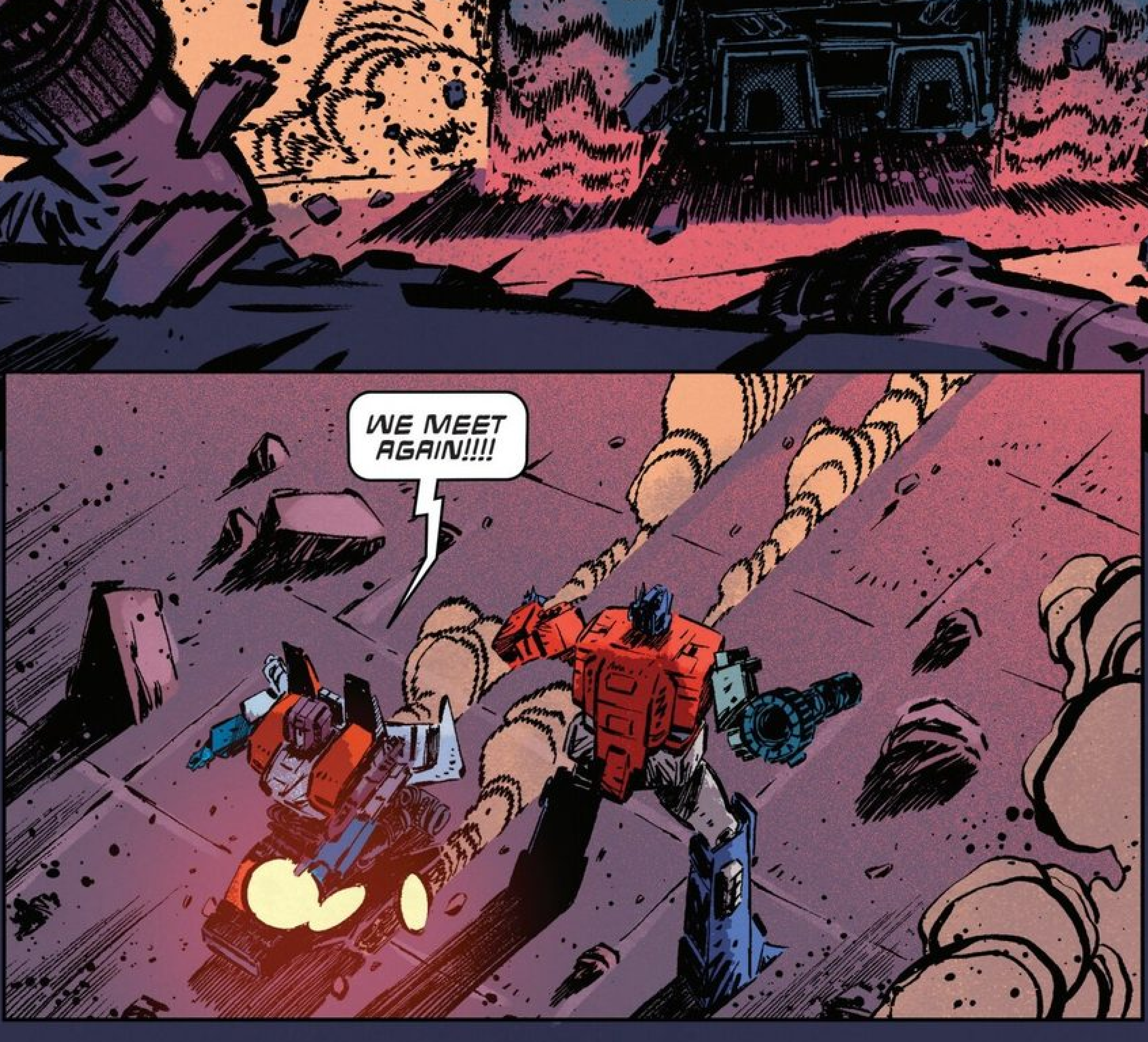

"HOLD UP."
GOT A PURPLE UP AHEAD. LOOKS LIKE A SCOUT.
BLURR, CAN WE GET PAST HIM WITHOUT--
ICHECKEDALLTHEROUTESTHISISTHEONLYONETHEONLYONE--
ALL RIGHT THEN.
WHAT ARE YOU--
chKt
SHRAKT

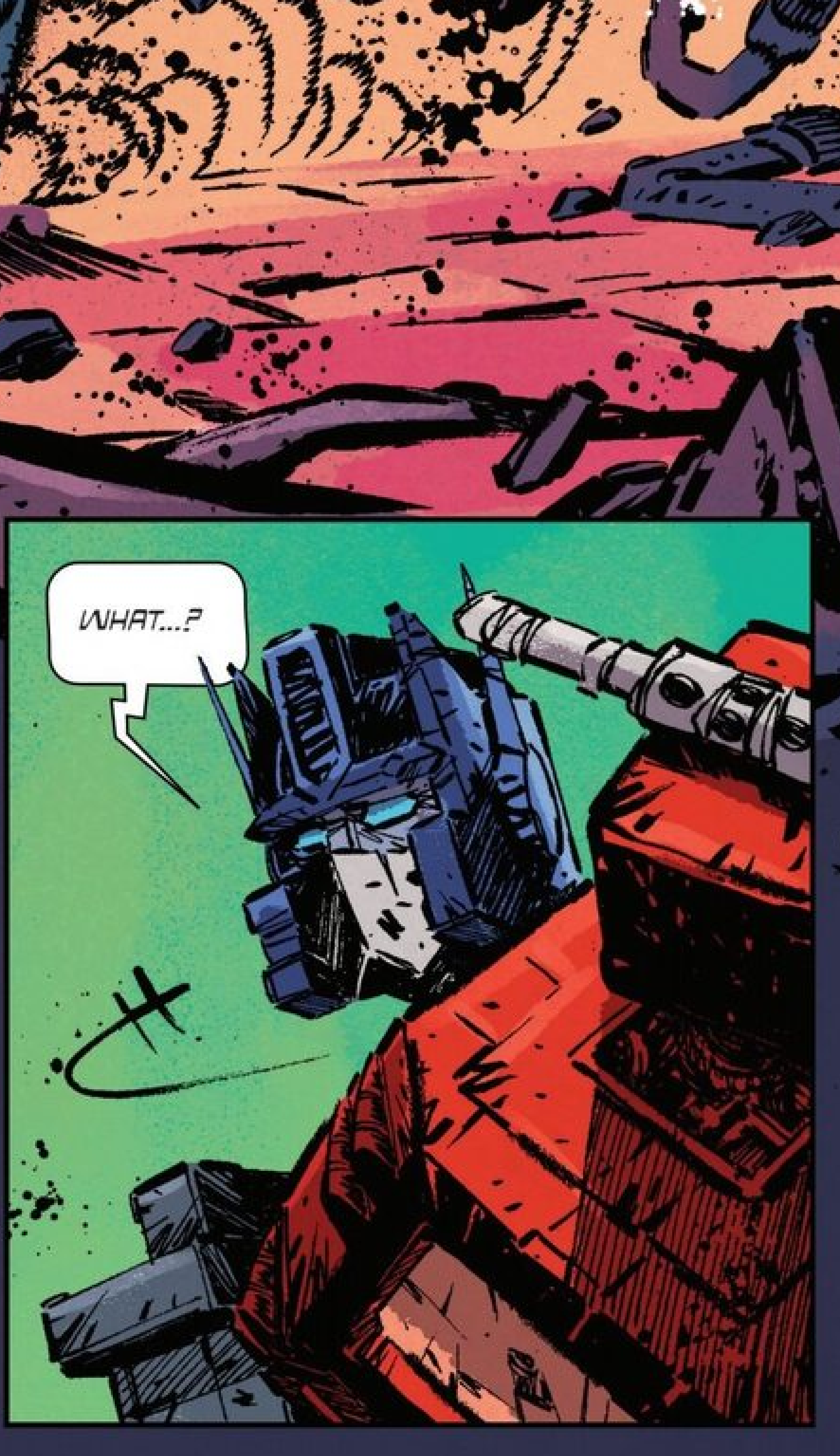

HURRY, BEFORE WE LOSE ALL HIS ENERGON.
HKKK--
...BLUESTREAK...
YOU'VE CHANGED.
THINGS GOT MESSY AFTER YOU LEFT. AND SINCE WHEN DO YOU GET ALL MUSHY OVER A DECEPTICON?
I...
LET ME GUESS. OPTIMUS.
HE'S TAUGHT ME A DIFFERENT WAY. A BETTER W--
AND WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME HE TRULY HAD TO SURVIVE?
WHOAH.
HELLO, CLIFFJUMPER.

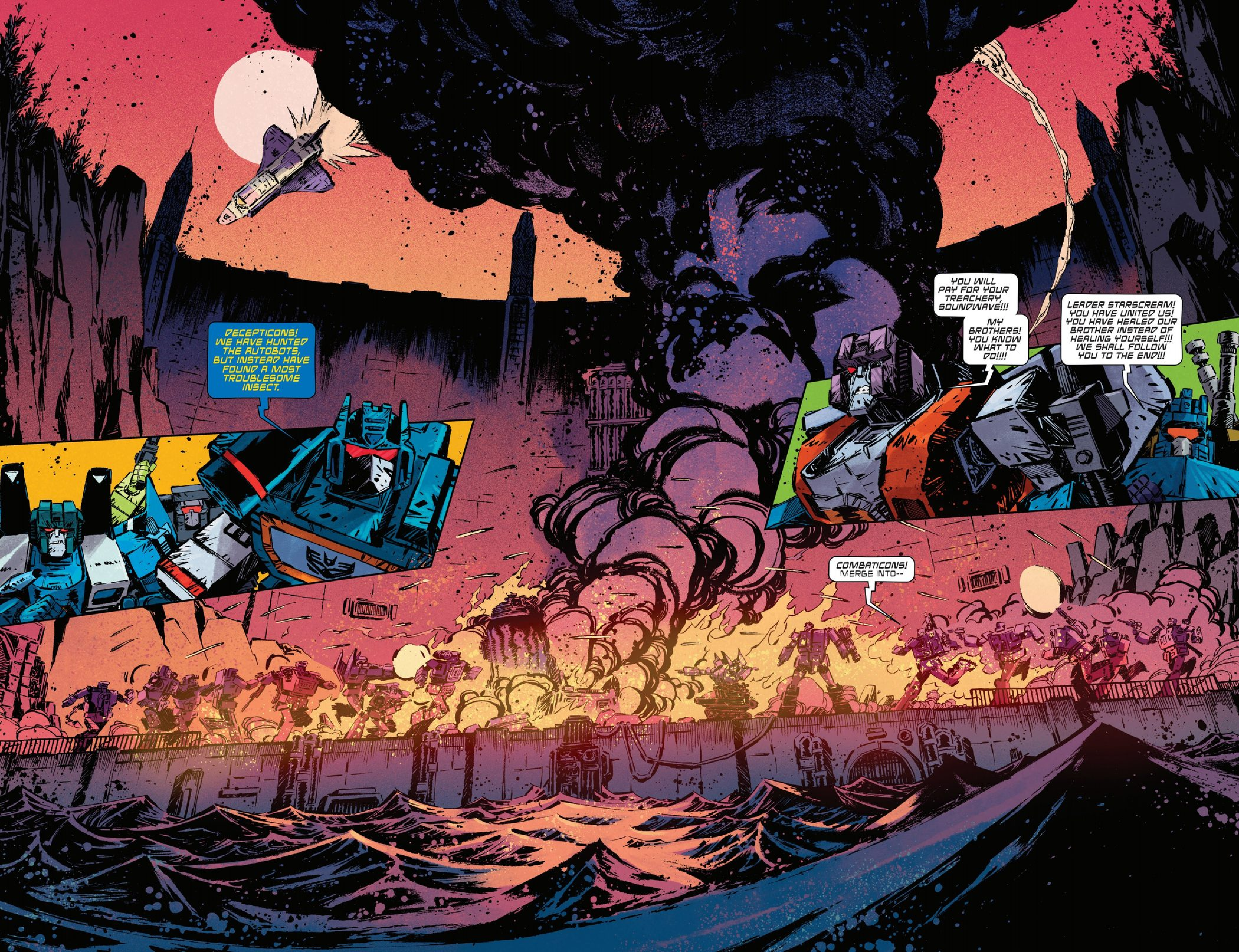

OPTIMUS... WHAT **HAPPENED** BACK THERE?
I DON'T KNOW, WHEELJACK. I...FEEL LIKE AN OLD VERSION OF MYSELF, WHEN I WAS FULL OF ANGER AND BLIND WITH VENGEANCE. SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT.
WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE ARK, I'LL DO SOME MORE SCANS.
BUT WITH ARCEE AND BEACHCOMBER OUT LOOKING FOR MAGNUS, IT'S TIME FOR REINFORCEMENTS.
WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO CREATE ENOUGH ENERGON TO BRING BACK ANOTHER ONE OF OUR WARRIORS.
SKKZATZZZZZZZZ
WELCOME, TRAILB--

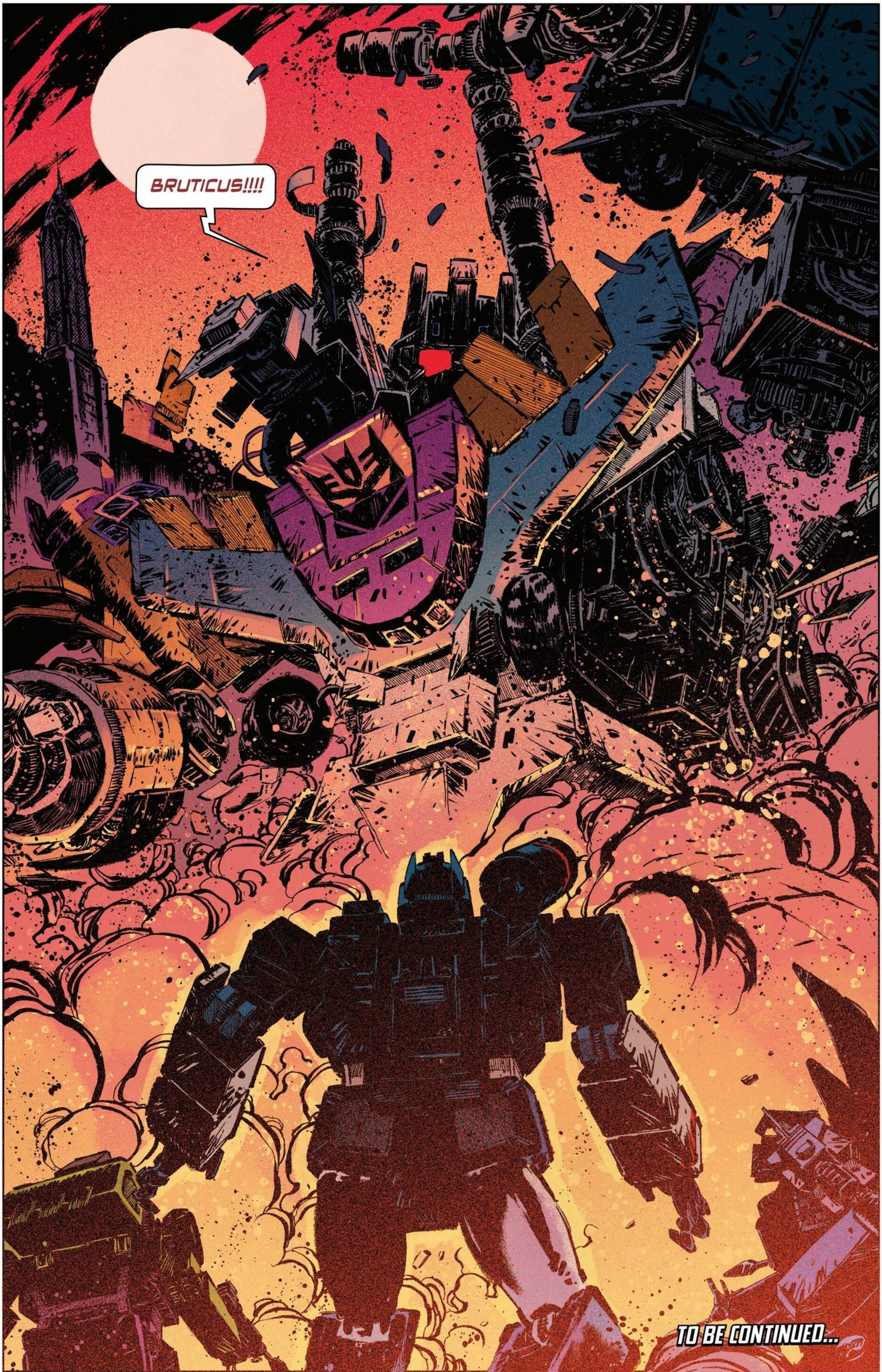

CHOM
WHOAH!!!
CHOM
CHOM
ASTROTRAIN!
SPIKE SAID HE WAS LEFT IN CHAINS! HOW DID HE GET FREE?!
DOESN'T MATTER NOW! **OPEN FIRE!**
ZAP ZAP ZAP
BOOMM
HAHA!


FINALLY!!!!
BZOW
BZOW
BZOW


WE MEET AGAIN!!!!


WHAT...?


DECEPTICONS! WE HAVE HUNTED THE AUTOBOTS, BUT INSTEAD HAVE FOUND A MOST TROUBLESOME INSECT.
YOU WILL PAY FOR YOUR TREACHERY, SOUNDWAVE!!!
MY BROTHERS! YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO!!!!
LEADER STARSCREAM! YOU HAVE UNITED US! YOU HAVE HEALED OUR BROTHER INSTEAD OF HEALING YOURSELF!!! WE SHALL FOLLOW YOU TO THE END!!!
COMBATICONS! MERGE INTO--


BRUTICUS!!!!
TO BE CONTINUED...

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SEND LETTERS TO
TRANSFORMERS@SKYBOUND.COM

And THAT is how you end an issue, folks! I can only imagine what's going through Soundwave's mind haha…welcome back to another Matrix of Lettership, I'm your co-host Ben Abernathy and joining me as always is the Commandant of Combiners, Daniel Warren Johnson!

Thanks, Ben! Let's give it up for an ASTOUNDING return to the TF comics, Jorge Corona, please take a bow! Holy crap, man, this issue is so cool. If you thought this was something, just wait until NEXT ISSUE, GAHHHHH! Too much coffee this morning! Love it! TO LETTERS!

* * *

Hiya Skybound Team!

I just wanna say how much y'all been helping me through some tough times over here in Florida with the Hurricane Helene situation. Daniel's writing, Jorge's art and Mike's colors work so well together to tell what I feel is the perfect marriage between G1 and the Bayverse, and it's been keeping me company while dealing with some pretty stressful stuff.

Daniel's way of handling themes such as pacifism, revenge and, most recently with Magnus/PTSD, has just been wonderful and proves how the medium of comics can be used to tell such powerful stories when the creatives are allowed to do their thing.

I do have one question though: will we be seeing more characters and elements from across the Transformers series? Like say… some of the Combiners from the Unicron Trilogy?

Keep up the good work out there, guys! I can't wait to see what Daniel and the rest of you are cooking up for the future of this book!

-Jim Vargas, FL

Thanks for writing in, Jim, and I'm really glad our series can help bring you some joy in these challenging times. Stay safe!

Heyo Jim, thanks for writing in, and I want to wish you the very best during what I am sure is an insane recovery from Helene. Combiners are one of my favorite parts of the TF lore, but I must remain tight lipped for now. That being said, how could I NOT add one more before I go? Hmmm…

* * *

Hello!

As of writing this, I read all 12 currently released TF issues and even the annual Energon Universe special and I am so grateful to everyone working on these books for bringing what to me, at least, is one of the best Transformers storylines in years.

I, myself, am a young and aspiring comic artist and I always turn to these books for reference and inspiration. I always admired the grungy yet colorful aesthetic of these books with probably some of the most fluid and dynamic action scenes I've seen in western comics. To all the talented pencillers, inkers and colorists, YOU'VE GOT THE TOUCH and don't lose it!!

Anyway, here are some questions! (sorry if there are any repeats haha)

1) Aside from, obviously, current TF and G.I. Joe, are there any other 80's-90's properties you would like to adapt if you had the chance?

There are maybe a few out there, but honestly, TRANSFORMERS was my absolute, gold tier, number one choice to work on, so anything else would be a distant second…

2) As long as you still have the license, do you want the TF comics to remain as a single long run with occasional annuals and specials and such or do you want to do subseries, spinoffs, etc.?

Right now our focus is entirely on the monthly title…what does the future hold? Who can know as we're constantly discussing our long-term plans…

I don't like having to think about the reading experience when spread across too many titles, so for myself, that's not something I'd be interested in. I want to make THIS book as special as possible while having it be the ONLY TRANSFORMERS book on the shelves. Let's give people their money's worth!

3) Is the G1 aesthetic gonna stay for a long time? Not that there's anything wrong with it, but it would be cool to see other characters and concepts appear from throughout the TF history, maybe even in their G1-ified TF Legacy designs (add Lockdown and my life is yours)

A great idea! That being said, we're staying pretty true to form when it comes to G1, but this universe is ever evolving and changing, so what I will say is NEVER SAY NEVER!

4) Any super obscure weirdos you would like to add to the story? Like, Japanese continuity characters (Starsaber, Deathsaurus, etc) or Marvel characters (Rack 'n Ruin, Jhiaxus as a future antagonist mayhaps, hmmm?)

I don't know ANY of those characters, shame on me, so I will say no for now. But getting deep into the lore is something I love to do, and I'm sure your itch will be scratched in time!

Thank you for your time! 'Til all are one!

Alex "Digi-O" K.

Great questions, Alex, thanks for writing…and keep working on your skills, I'd love to see you as a published comic artist someday!

Ditto that! Keep at it, my friend, and good luck!

* * *

Hello Transformers Team,

I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude for reigniting my passion for Transformers. My first encounter with the Robots in Disguise was in fifth grade when my friend had an Optimus Prime toy stuck in an awkward halfway transformation. It was a jumble of limbs, exhaust pipes, and wheels. My appreciation for the characters didn't fully bloom until the release of the Cybertron games. I was captivated by the concept of giant transforming robots! However, my enthusiasm waned when I began working for a movie review program. But then, Skybound announced the creative team for this incredible book, and I was certain of one thing: if anyone could create a remarkable Transformers book, it was you guys.

In short: This book is fantastic! Thank you so much!

Max,
Toronto, ON

Thank you for reading, Max! We are bonded in that "awkward halfway transformation" club as the very same thing happened when I got my first Transformer as a kid--Thundercracker--and it took my adult cousin to carefully read the directions to complete the transformation haha.

Max, I gotta say, I was too worried my Optimus toy would break if I left him half transformed, so I always made sure he was in one version or the other. All that to say, I do remember being frustrated having to take five minutes to change him from robot mode to truck mode to make his escape during whatever escapades I had my toys doing at the moment. Transformers toys, nothing like 'em!

* * *

Hi Matrix of Leadership!

I'm Patricia, a huge, huge fan of Transformers--all continuities--and, an even bigger fan of Starscream! I was JUST introduced to your series last night, a Tuesday night, binged it in one sitting, and discovered this morning that the very next issue was releasing the same day. Not only that, the issue was a feature on Starscream's origins! My friends don't understand how hyped up I am right now after reading it. I think I have read Issue #13 thrice over now, and even picked up a second copy to collage those juicy panels with.

I am very excited for the next concluding arc issue. So far, the story pacing, emotional beats and conflict is just so well-written to me. As a student studying in entertainment concept design, I am breaking down each panel by panel on not just the raw expression and poses, but everything to the composition and colors that you guys use to convey the story. God, if this was animated, it would make people cry. Skybound's Transformers is now one of my art bibles (I ended up buying the entire series physically so I can parse through everything) and I hope that one day I will be able to work on Transformers media as well. I can really see the love and passion woven into these frames and could only imagine what the planning of it all looks like.

If you see this, Jason, I loved all the Starscream faces in this issue, ESPECIALLY the ":0" ones!

Thank you!!
Patricia

Thank for the incredibly kind and inspiring letter, Patricia. I hope you continue your studies and achieve your dreams and I can't help but think it's FATE with you picking up the series. I can't wait for you to see what we have planned for Starscream in year two and now I can't top thinking about how cool a Skybound TRANSFORMERS art bible would be… hmmm…

For real. Get on it, Skybound! What about an art bible complete with a character line up/power scale section for each Autobot and Decepticon? You're welcome. But seriously, Patricia, thank you for writing in and sharing your passion of making things with us, and for telling us how this comic has helped you on that journey. It makes me so happy that we were able to give you a little bit of that all-important essence of inspiration to keep going and better yourself at

the craft you've dedicated your life to. Godspeed!

Dear Skybound editorial team,

I just finished issue 13 of transformers and I'm very impressed by this issue. The art is as always amazing in these books. The new artist for this arc is doing a great job on the art. I really liked Genvo and I'm hoping that he's not dead and could potentially come back. Even if he is dead if we ever get a pre-Cybertronian war arc I would hope Genvo can return because I really liked his character.

Speaking of a pre-Cybertronian war arc would it be possible we see something like that as a full 6 issue arc?

Who knows what the future holds!

I've also got a couple more questions:

1st question: After we finish this small Starscream arc will we see more of the crazy Optimus we saw in issue 12. Maybe more about how Optimus changed from being a heartless warrior.

Yes to the first part and not at this time on the second part. (And I honestly doubt there was ever a point where Optimus Prime was heartless)

2nd question: Will Megatron return to power sometime soon? Because at least from what I know Megatron isn't dead, he's falling apart lost in the middle of a snowy mountain area. I guess it wouldn't be a shocking return if we knew it was coming.

All I will say on this is: HEH HEH HEH HEH

Also after seeing something in the notes about a Jazz one shot I'm hoping that someday that could happen. Anyways I hope you're doing well and can continue to write this amazing series.

K.

Thank you for reading…and hmm, I'd love to read that Jazz story, too…

Anybody else get the (music) jazz reference in issue 4? He says "2, 5, 1" as he slams Soundwave, calling out the famous chord progression in jazz, which is also one of my favorite movements in all of music. Check it out! Thanks for reading, K! And thanks to Jason Howard for his amazing art duties on issue 13! Making dreams happen!

Bah weep granah weep nini bong, Skybound team!

I have just finished issue 13 and have never been as excited so far about the next issue.

Wow. Just wow. Firstly, I don't think I've ever got as emotional about a comic before haha! Also, that art in issue 13 was just spot on--love the clean designs.

My dad and I have been Transformer fans for a long time (he's been a fan from 1984!) and I'm just in love with this new season! Keep it up.

Transformers brings families together!!!

Okay, on to the questions:

1. When will there be a Genvo toy? (I need one!)

We need one, too! Let's all keep our fingers crossed!

****Grabs megaphone* HASBRO? LET'S GOOOO!***

2. Where did you get inspiration for Genvo?

I was talking with Jason Howard, who designed him, and Jason told me that he was trying to reference a "proto" version of a Seeker, what we know Starscream looks like. I think he hit it out of the park!

3. And finally, why pick Ulchtar as Starscream's previous name? Is there any story behind it?

Yes! Ultchar was the working name of Starscream in the Marvel Comics continuity until Bob Budiansky changed it!

Thank you so much! Can't wait for the next issues!

Kind regards,
Kara

And that's a wrap for another blockbuster issue of TRANSFORMERS! If this issue left your head spinning I can pretty much guarantee you're gonna hit the floor after you read #16! See ya in a month!

-Ben

I'm so, so, so pumped for you all to see what comes next. Here's a little snippet of my script for issue 16 that I gave to Jorge:

BRU

-DWJ

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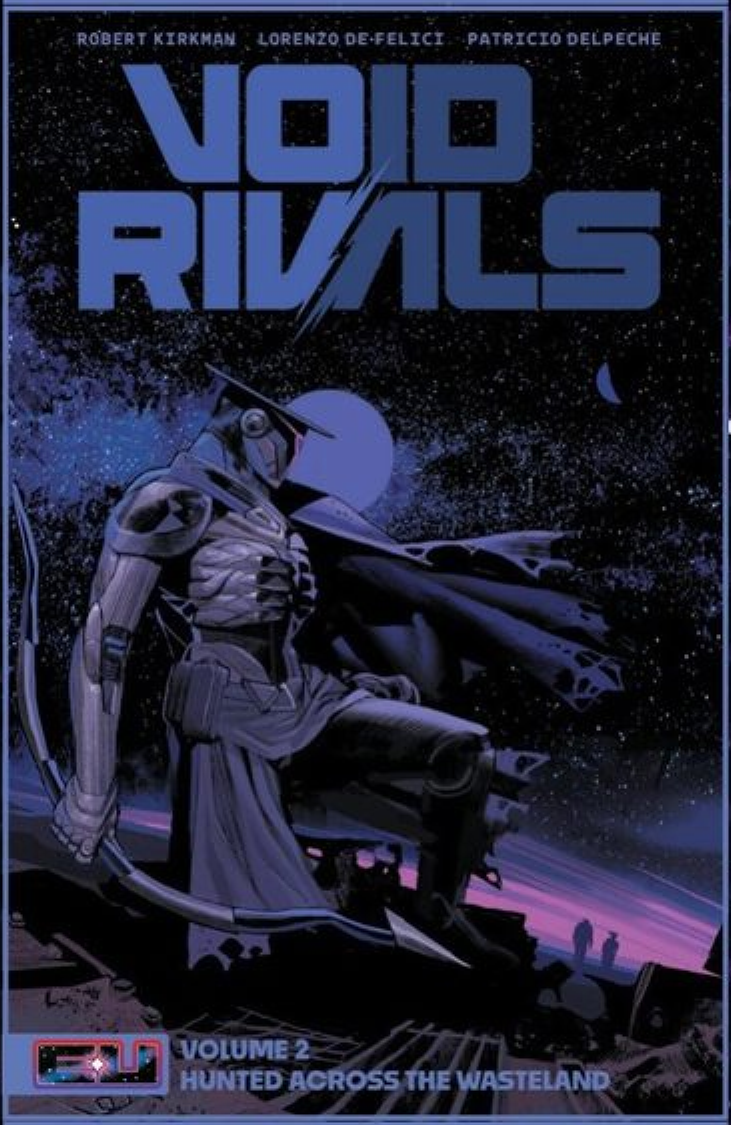
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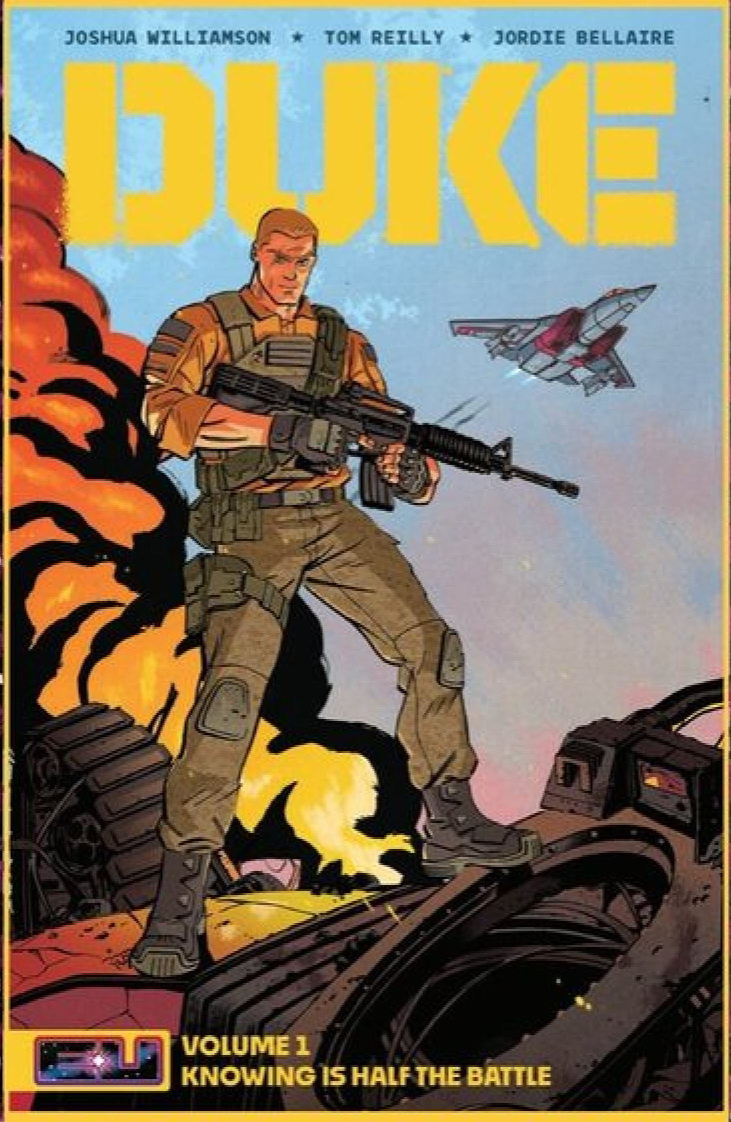
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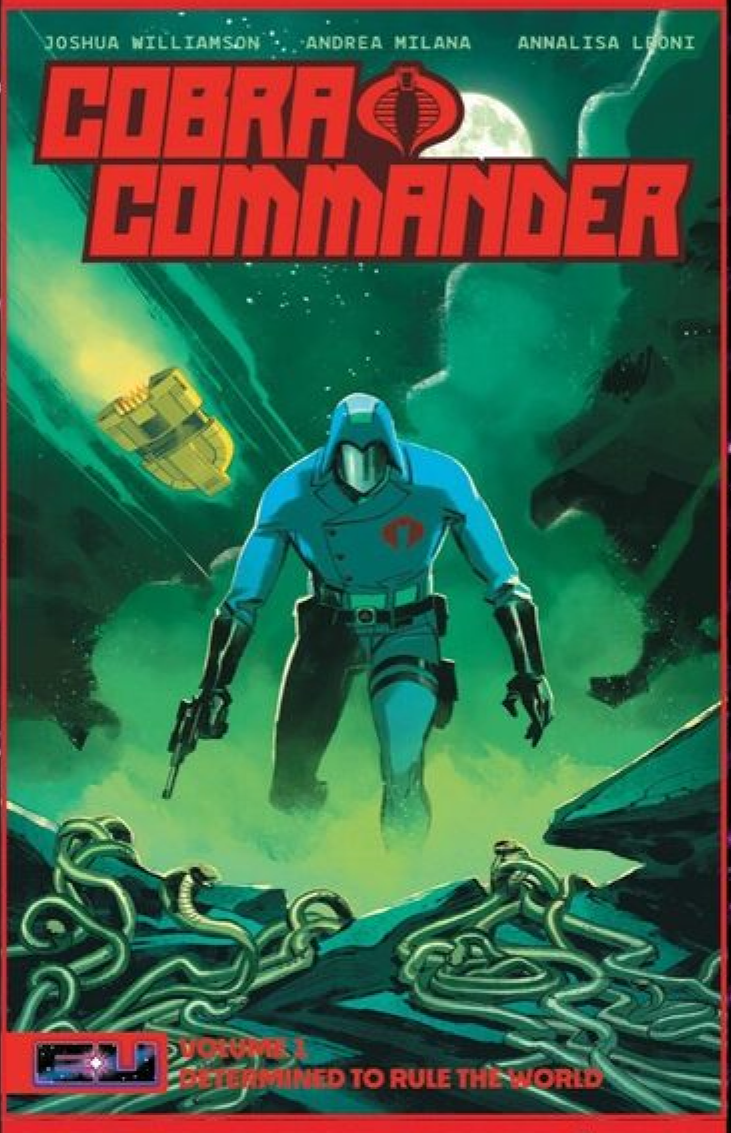
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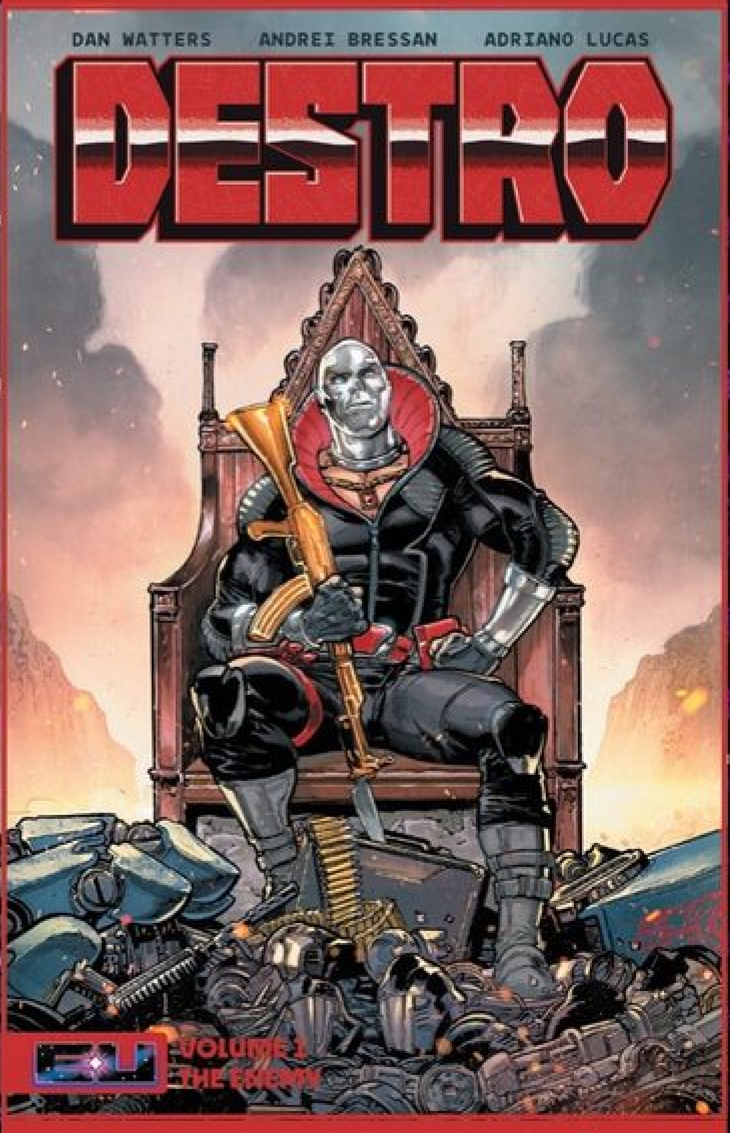
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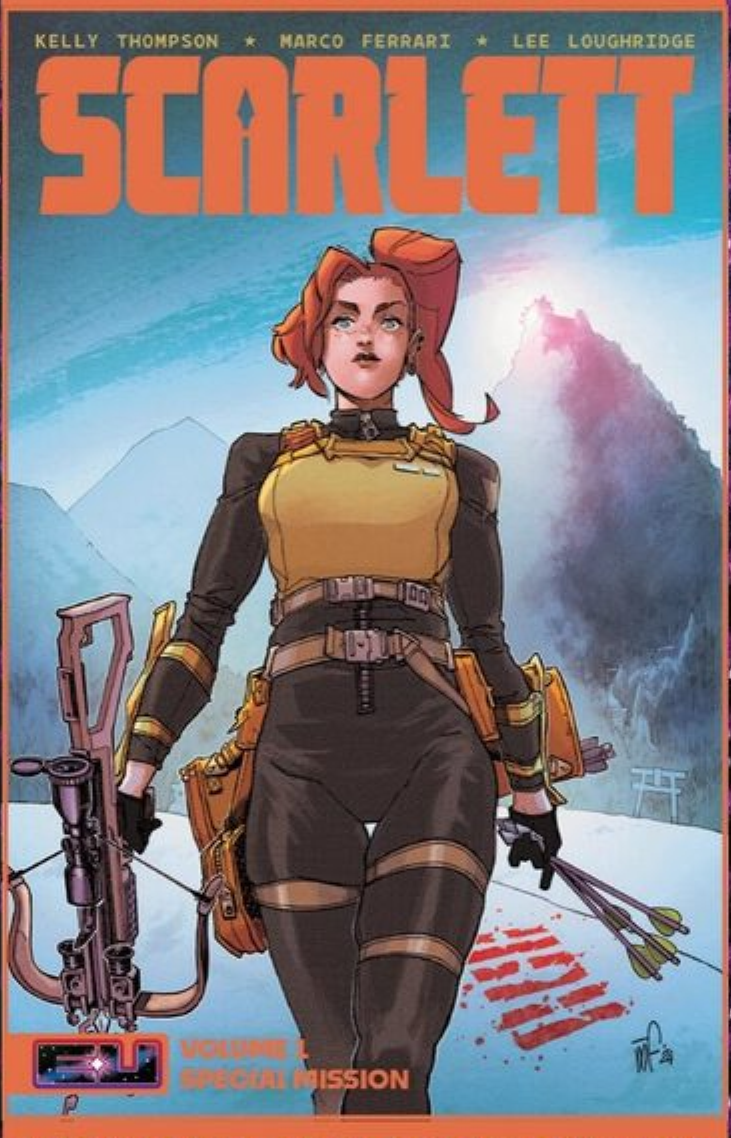
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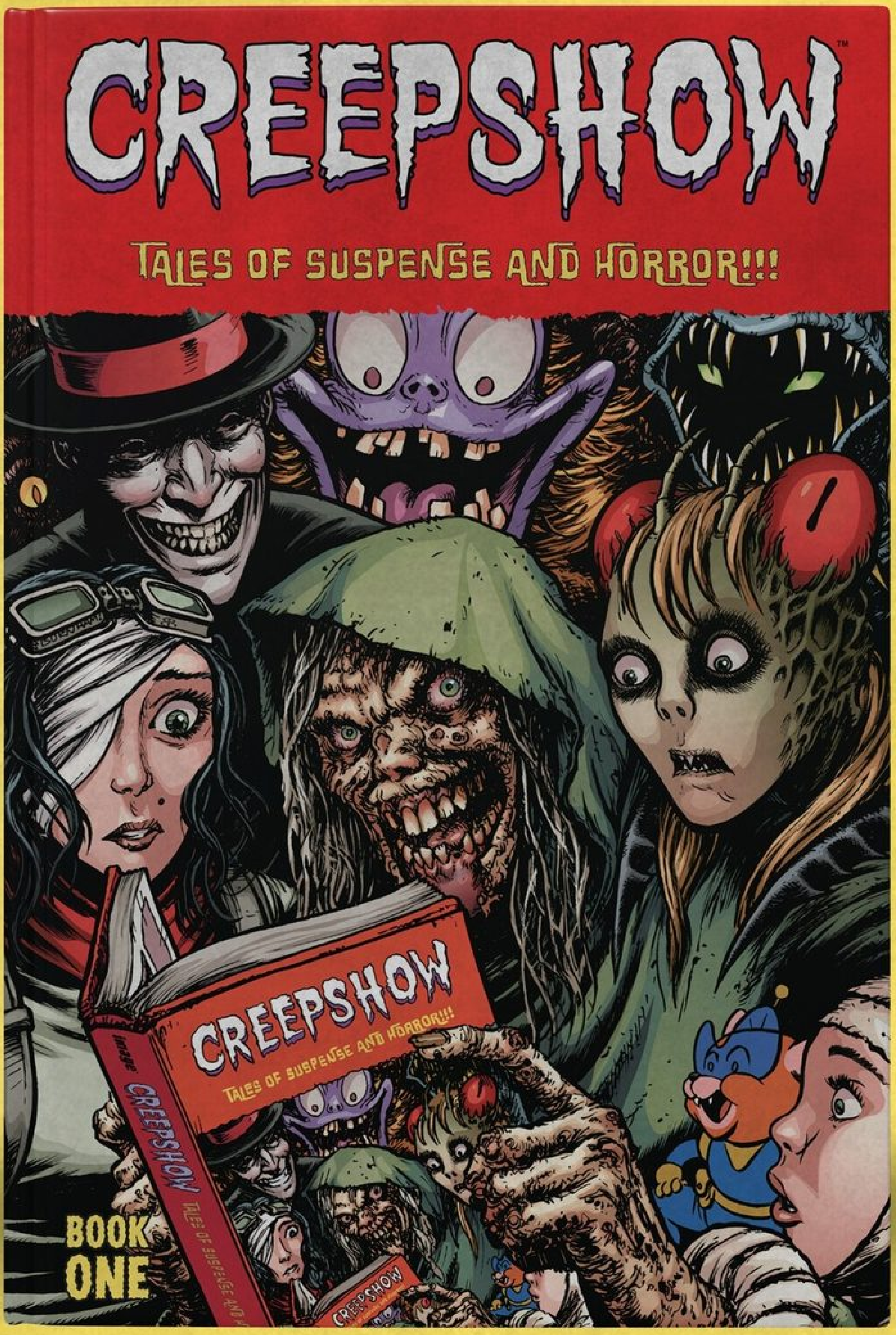
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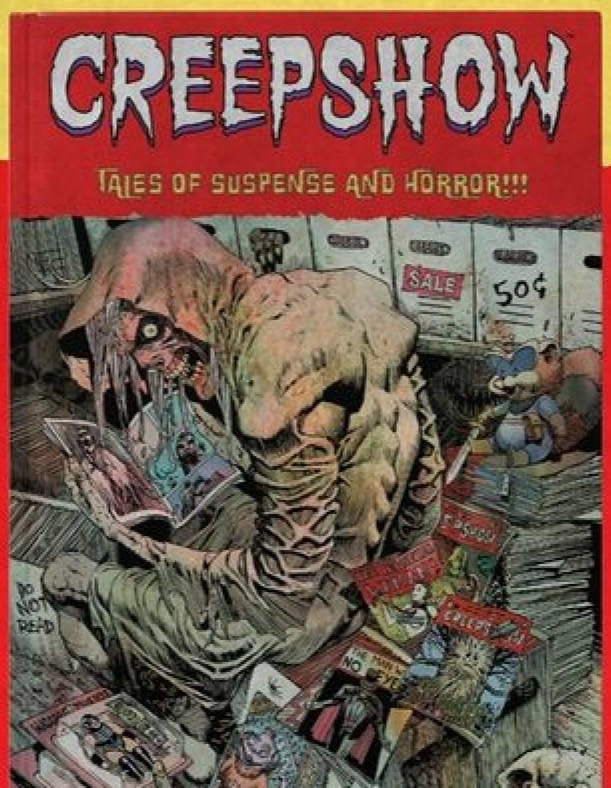
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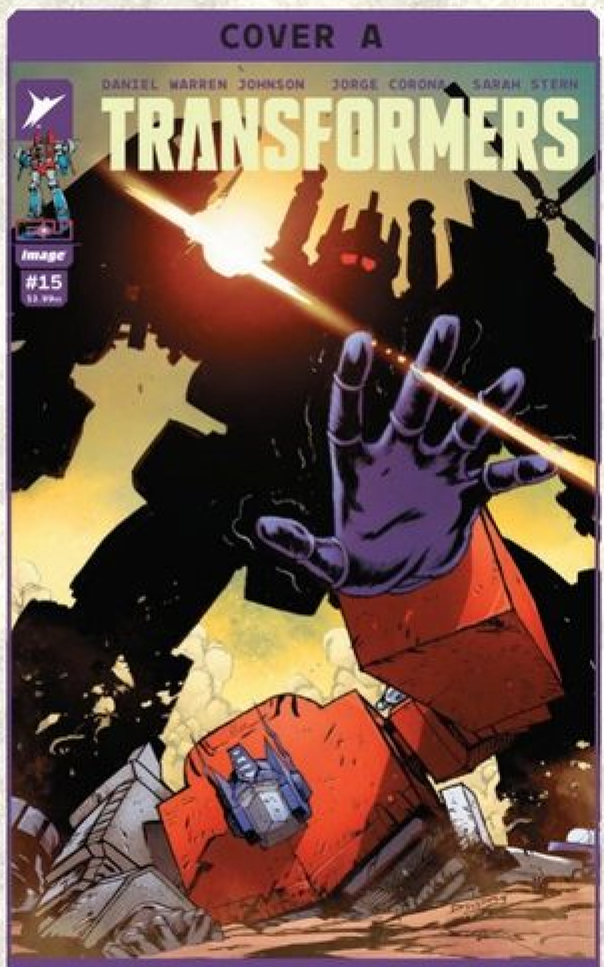
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